

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

IN THIS ISSUE

THE HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

By FRANK L. MANSUR

DRAMA AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

By MAX GOBEL

WRITING FOR TELEVISION

By JOSEPH HAYES

THEATRE ON THE AIR

By JUNE MITCHELL

OPEN WIDE THE DOOR

By OPAL BRITTON

DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET

By STANLEY J. WHITE

92.105
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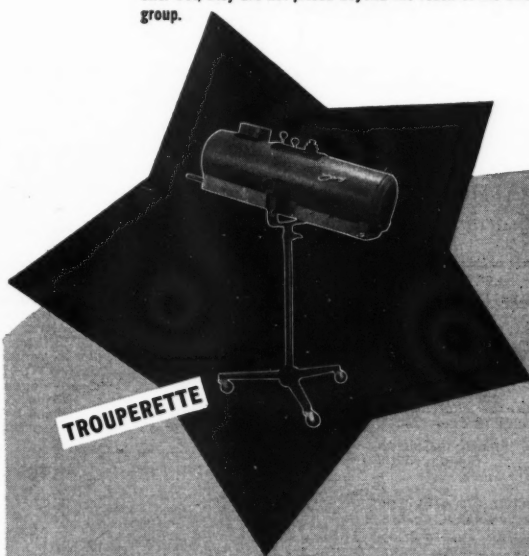
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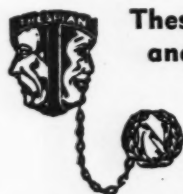
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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

The High School Theatre <i>by Frank L. Mansur</i>	7
Open Wide the Door <i>by Opal Britton</i>	8
Writing for Television <i>by Joseph Hayes</i>	9

SERIES

Theatre on the Air <i>by June Mitchell</i>	10
Drama and Physical Education <i>by Max Gobel</i>	12

FEATURES

As I See It	4
In This Issue	5
Thespian Chatter	22
Don't Keep It a Secret <i>by Stanley J. White</i>	24

DEPARTMENTS

Cooperation Plus! (Drama for Children) <i>by Louise C. Horton</i>	13
Staging <i>Sight Unseen</i> (Play of the Month) <i>by Roberta Seibert</i>	14
Theatre on Broadway <i>by Paul Myers</i>	18
Dialing Around (Radio, Television) <i>by Si Mills</i>	20
Brief Views <i>by Talbot Pearson</i>	32

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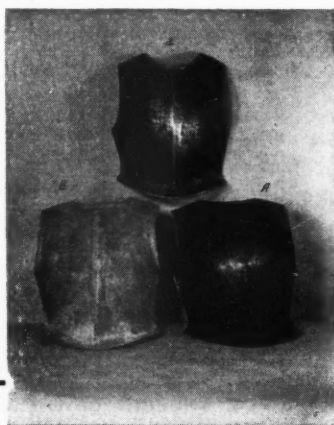
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The Ninth Biennial Convention of the Catholic Theatre Conference, sponsored by Loretto Heights College, suburban Denver, Colorado, will be held June 10-13. Practical and stimulating experiences for personnel of college, community, children's and high school theatres will be available for all delegates. Having attended its last convention in Chicago in June, 1951, I found it inspirational, stimulating and hospitable. If finances are available, I'd take advantage of this opportunity to journey to Denver this coming June.

ACTIVITY IS THE ANSWER!

Although the National Thespian Society is an honor society recognizing only work done in the secondary school theatre, I am afraid in too many of our troupes the enthusiasm and interest evident in attaining membership passes away after the goal has been reached. Are your student Thespians active throughout the two or three years in which they are members? In our national office we can easily pass judgment by the number of "Star" and "Honor" Thespians reported. I do not blame the Thespian who deserts his society for some other school activity in which he can more actively participate. Granted that the same Thespians cannot be in all the plays, I still feel that we are negligent by not providing at least at

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM J. DURLING

Superintendent of the Clearview, Ohio,
School System

Dec. 30, 1952

"An administrator who sincerely believed in the objectives of
The National Thespian Society"

rather proud of that record. It makes us feel more than ever the leaders in the secondary school theatre are the schools which are members of this society.

To Sam Boyd, Jr., Director of Drama at West Virginia University, goes our orchid of the month for his leadership in renewing this drama festival for the high schools of West Virginia. Under his guidance we feel sure that within a few years this drama festival will again rank nationally among the best. The finals will be held at Mr. Boyd's school on May 15, 16.

CLIPPED FROM OUR LETTERS!

"We are having the best year we have had since I have been sponsor as far as accomplishment is concerned, and I truly feel it is a result of our Cincinnati meeting and tour of Thespian headquarters. Now I feel and know you are truly interested in each troupe and what it does." —*Florence Croft, Troupe 140, Lookout, W. Va.*



Troupe 157 of Liberty Memorial High School, Lawrence, Kansas, held its midsemester initiation on Friday, January 25. Pictured above is a scene from the chicken dinner which preceded the ceremonies. Mrs. Harold Harvey is the Sponsor.

several nights throughout the year a program of student directed one-act plays. Let's keep our Troupe alive with activity; it will pay real dividends.

WELCOME THESPIAN TROUPE 1262!

It is not often that I include in this column public recognition to a school to which a Charter has just been granted. But when a school reports 90 Charter members, such recognition is deserved. Welcome into our Thespian family Thespian Troupe 1262, Ottawa Hills High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Elva Van Hartsma, Sponsor.

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The National Thespian Society conducts a Teacher Placement System for its successful and progressive Troupe Sponsors. If you are looking for an experienced teacher who has the "know-how" for teaching dramatics, coaching plays and sponsoring Thespian Troupes, we welcome your inquiries. There is no fee either for the school or the applicant — just another service of this organization.

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Thirty-one of the 36 schools which will participate in the revival of the West Virginia State Drama Festival are Thespian affiliated schools. Here in the national office we are

"Since our affiliation with National Thespians, our dramatics program has become one of the strongest in Southern California, and our local society holds a position of esteem on our campus which is greatly appreciated by the student body, the faculty and the administration." *Robert L. Rivera, Former Sponsor, Troupe 485, —San Pedro, Calif.*

"We have received invaluable aid from our *DRAMATICS Magazine* and also, the University of Virginia School and Community Drama Service of which we are a participating member. All of our Thespian members are determined to promote interest and participation in dramatics both in our school and county." —*Roger Goodson, Secretary, Troupe 1244, Carysbrook, Va.*

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

"I believe that nationwide educational television is economically sound," Charles E. Wilson, former defense mobilizer, said. "Education is a big business, perhaps the biggest single business existing today. It adequately can support the operation and programming of the 242 television channels now set aside for non-commercial educational purposes. If it increased the educational level only a few percentage points, and I feel it can do more than that, the increase in the value and the product of increased skill and knowledge would more than pay for its cost."

In This Issue

NO article was more welcome for this entire year than *The High School Theatre*, written by Frank L. Mansur, Superintendent, Retired, Swampscott, Mass., Public Schools. This paper (originally read at the New England Theatre Conference held in Boston last fall) certainly proves that there are administrators who are not just passively sympathetic to high school theatre, but definitely sold on its educational and recreational values. If I were still teaching, this is one article I would hand to my principal with a plea that he read it carefully. Your editor will welcome other articles by administrators who recognize real value of drama to the high school program, for our society believes that once they are sold on the value of drama, half of the job for bettering the high school theatre is accomplished.

JOSEPH HAYES, known by this time to a large number of our Sponsors and Theatians for his successful plays written in collaboration with his wife, Marrijane, offers timely suggestions to you who are looking toward television as a career. Mr. Hayes is well qualified to advise you about *Writing for Television* as his own authoring appeared in *The Web*, *Suspense*, *Bigelow* and the *Starlight Theatre*. He is now writing a new TV comedy series.

WHEN her students complained that there were not ample opportunities for them to participate in drama at her school, Mrs. Opal Britton, Sponsor of Troupe 526, Fruita, Colorado, took steps immediately to remedy the situation. She sponsored an inter-school play festival at which time student-directed one-act plays were presented. The festival has become one of the annual highlights of her school and community. You too should be inspired to follow her plan which she explains in her article, *Open Wide the Door*, especially if your department is still plagued with the old-fashioned, undemocratic class plays.

JUNE Mitchell continues her series of *Theatre after Graduation* with her seventh article, *Theatre on the Air*. She again tells you very frankly what preparation is necessary, what kind of colleges and universities to attend, how to get started and finally what the odds are of your obtaining a job in both radio and television. I am fully convinced that her series of articles should be in the offices of all our high school guidance counselors.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND DRAMA is our seventh article of our series, *Working Together*. Max Gobel, Sponsor of Troupe 977, Petaluma, Calif., High School, calls our attention to the fact that the high school theatre needs the physical education department as well as that department needs dramatics. One who does musicals and pageants with their modern tap and ballet dances and folk dances realizes this need of working together. It seems to me that administrators are showing good judgment in insisting that teachers in physical education have educational preparation and experience in the fine art of the Dance.

SIGHT UNSEEN is Dr. Blank's choice for this issue's *Play of the Month*. Roberta Seibert, Sponsor of Troupe 191, Webster Groves, Mo., recommends this play to all of you who are looking for a good fantasy-comedy. She tells you in her article that her students were enthusiastic about it and that it is good, clean, wholesome fun. With a recommendation like that from Miss Seibert, who is nationally known for the excellency of her productions, what else is there to say?



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ACCORDING to available statistics there are more than 22,400 public high schools (only heaven knows how many others) in the United States. Every one of them is teeming with pupils, and almost every one of those pupils is packed full of a potent charge of willing-to-be-directed enthusiasm, and looking for a sane channel in which to get rid of it. Not all of them want to put it to work in the same area, to be sure, but I am certain that even schoolmen themselves are blind to the number who would direct it into the field of the theatre, given a chance. For example, in our school of 450 pupils, it is a rare occasion when 25% of them don't report for try-outs for a school play; and in a neighboring school out of a total enrollment of 300 in the sophomore class, 175 sophomore girls alone have just reported to compete for places in a cast. *The football coach who gets a turnout like that considers himself a lucky man.*

Now of course not all of these enthusiastic young people have outstanding acting ability, nor do they all have

THE HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

By FRANK L. MANSUR

an abiding love for the theatre, but many of them have some of both; and hidden in the mass of them are concealed our professional stars of the future, just as hidden in it in the past have been our stars of the present. I saw Ruth Gordon in what was probably her very first play — not with her name in lights on Broadway, but as an obscure little girl in a high school play in one of our suburban high schools ten miles to the south of Boston. And at just about the same time ten miles to the north was a lanky high school kid by the name of Walter Brennan.

Let us grant in the beginning that there are certain shortcomings in the high school theatre. No doubt that is the reason why some of our friends look down their noses at it. True, the actors are untrained as they come to us. They have little or nothing of acting technique. They have small acquaintance with any type of bodily movement or poise not connected with the particular variation of the debutante slouch or the

athletic stride current at the moment. They know very little of the manners and deportment of any period except their own. They lack any conception of the mental processes and the conventions that inhibited their grandmothers. But — and here is the point that those above are failing to recognize — they *can* be taught and they *are being* taught those things better under the best school and college directors today than in the professional summer theatres that seek them out to run errands as apprentices under the guise of instructing them. Really, you know, there is little useful dramatic virtue to be gained by helping Tallulah Bankhead into her cloak, and that is the kind of thing too many apprentices have to spend too much of their time doing.

Now, I have used the term "best school and college directors" advisedly, because I think part of the shortcomings lie in that area. It is not sufficient that a school director shall have been graduated from a school of dramatic arts. It is not sufficient that she or he of course should be steeped in love of the theatre. It is not sufficient that she be an accomplished actress. *What is important is that innately she should first of all be a teacher, that she should know how to handle and to exact the respect of high school pupils and that she should be able to impart what she knows clearly and with imagination.* Given these personal qualities, then, and only then, her other assets of knowledge and of ability to act and of love of art may assume a position of all-importance. Otherwise they are very little. And it seems to me that at the moment we are getting too much of the insufficiencies and not enough of the necessities.

One other of our weak points needs comment — that of underestimating what young people can accomplish. Standards are never lifted by activity conducted on a lower level. Consequently, when we select plays such as some of the publishing houses put out as "High School Plays," we are defeating the very end that we have in view.

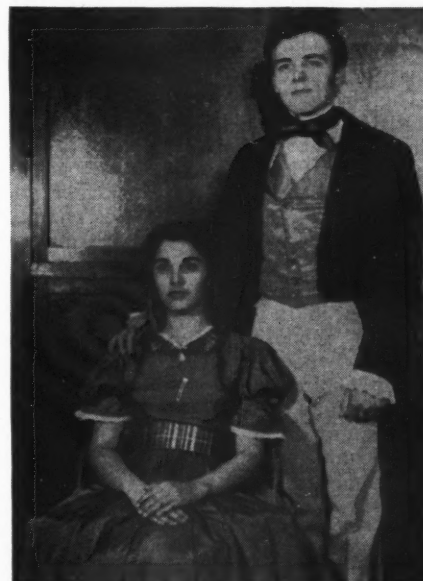
Do you not agree with me that there is a dearth of good plays for high schools? I don't mean plays that *sell* to high schools. I mean plays of real quality that high school pupils can present to their public. I mean plays that have the elements that make a professional production a success *without the sophistication of situation and dialogue that makes impossible presenting them anywhere but on a professional stage.* I would venture to believe that any one of you here would be hard put to it to name twenty-five plays of the kind I mean without bringing Shakespeare into the list, and you would even have to expurgate some of him. I wish too someone could come forward able to prepare for high schools the kind and quality of pageantry that Paul Green has produced for the Williamsburg festivals. I think his fortune would be made.



Sherril Hatcher and Fred Luper in a scene from *Night of January 16th*, Troupe 1066, Coquille, Ore., High School, Win Kelly, Director.

My experience is that high school pupils are rather keen at distinguishing between the good and the poor, once they have had experience with the good. My experience is that they can discriminate, and that they prefer and will select the good. And I have learned this — that to bring out the real ability that lies in a boy or a girl, you must offer it a challenge. And so I say, stop shying away from good plays. Seek them out. Let your young actors — and yourself — find the pleasure that comes from growth by effort. Let them have a try at *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *I Remember Mama*, *Quality Street*, *Captain Applejack*, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*,

(Continued on page 31)



Joan Kaufman and Tom Gaumer as Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, Troupe 410, Heights High School, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Dina Rees Evans, Director.

OPEN WIDE the DOOR

By OPAL BRITTON

ONE-ACT PLAYS are a community project at the Fruita, Colorado, High School. Teachers and patrons, working with our interested students, have helped us make our annual one-act play contest one of the highlights of the year.

It started when the local dramatic club, large in numbers, but small in opportunity to participate in stagecraft, decided to do something about greater opportunities for participation. Thus the one-act play contest was born. From the contest would be chosen the winning play to enter the annual Play Festival for the Western Slope of Colorado. The club handles the contest in this manner; anyone who is interested in taking part in a play can organize a group, or work with any other group. These groups do not necessarily represent any class or organization, but are usually composed of several friends who want to work together. Their chosen play must meet certain rules set up by the club and its sponsor.

Briefly, the rules of the contest are as follows: length of time in presentation must be the same time limit set for the Western Slope Festival; the play must be suitable for the group, and one suitable to represent the school later; the number of characters are to be kept at a minimum; all royalties must be cleared well in advance of the contest time. (The royalty, however, is paid by the club for the group chosen to represent the school at the Festival.) Each group must have (1) a director, either adult or student; (2) a stage manager to work with the manager who has charge of the stage for the contest; (3) a make-up artist; (4) an adult sponsor for each group (This adult may be a teacher or a person in the community, approved by the school administration); (5) students who enter the contest must meet school eligibility requirements; (6) practice time must be worked out with the sponsor of the club well in advance and arrangements for the use of the stage must be made early. These practice schedules are posted for each play group, along with the number of times it may use the stage. Each group must buy its own books and plan its own meeting time for practices.

By leaving the responsibility to the participants, the students grow in stature by working out their own projects.

Thus an opportunity is extended to each student who wishes to obtain experience in acting, in directing, or in any other phase of stagecraft in which he is interested. This does not necessarily produce polished plays, but the method does give many students a chance to participate and to learn something of the business of play production. Instead of one small group of students getting hours of work with much instruction for the Play Festival, many students get an opportunity to do something for it. The play given at the Festival may not get a superior rating, but, whatever the rating may be, the students are happy in knowing that they had the opportunity to participate.

The actual contest usually takes three nights. There are two nights in which each group gets a chance to present its play before three judges. At these performances four plays are chosen for the third night—the finals of the contest. The third night is set after a lapse of a

of the coveted performances which grows out of the contest is the presentation for the men at the Veterans Hospital.

The student organization for the contest performances includes (1) general stage manager; (2) his assistant; (3) properties manager; (4) make-up director; (5) call boy or girl; and (6) curtain boy.

All participating students earn points toward membership in the Fruita chapter of the National Thespian Society. This is the third year of the contest. There were 100 students participating one year and 84 the other. Without an active Dramatics Club because the school has no speech teacher this year, the Thespians are sponsoring the contest.

To cover the cost of the production, the club sells season tickets for all three performances. Although the expenses of the venture are quite high, there is always a nice profit for the club treasury.



Pictured above are the two casts of the 1951 spring production of *Seventeenth Summer*, Opal Britton, Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Fruita, Colo., High School.

day or two to allow for additional rehearsals of the casts chosen for repeat performances. The judges for the preliminary contest nights are asked to give constructive criticism, to choose four plays without rating them one above the other, and to choose the best boy and the best girl actors. The judge for the finals has been the teacher of dramatics from the neighboring Mesa College. She brings along some of her students of dramatics to help criticize the plays.

The club has purchased a plaque for this contest which has a place of honor in the school library. Each year a plate is added, giving the date, name of winning play, cast and director, if that director is a student.

Several opportunities are given for the play groups which did not win the contest to present their plays before other audiences. Clubs and organizations of the community request some of them to make repeat performances. One

Many who come for both preliminary nights return for the final presentation. All students who enter the preliminaries may see the plays free of charge.

This school contest gives many students a chance to participate in stagecraft who would otherwise never have had the opportunity. Anyone from freshman to senior may take part. It is the only real chance for the first two grades in our high school to take part in dramatics; for the junior and senior classes are the only classes which may put on a school sponsored play. The number of students getting parts in these major plays is small compared to the enrollment. This contest plan has worked so successfully for Fruita, that now some of the neighboring schools have started using it. I recommend this plan to all Thespian affiliated schools in which the demand for participation exceeds the supply of plays presented—and in what high school, large or small, is there a lack of student material?

WRITING for TELEVISION

By JOSEPH HAYES

TELEVISION, the *enfant terrible* of the entertainment arts, is growing up — a little. At least it has graduated to long pants. Perhaps its voice is still changing, and perhaps its growing pains are simultaneously painful, embarrassing and amusing. But what we're concerned with here are the conditions: writing for television as it exists today.

In the first place writing (this can never be repeated often enough) requires arduous work, intense concentration, the slow and painful development of skill. This applies to *all* writing. Inspiration, or the creative part, is totally worthless unless one has acquired the particular techniques. A story as great as *Hamlet* or *Great Expectations* has no meaning, no value, unless the creator has the know-how to bring it before an audience. First, then, one must study. A broad general education, because it prepares one for *any* work, is of incalculable value. Particular skills develop more rapidly and satisfactorily in a well-rounded individual. After one has acquired such a background, an intense and constant study of the requirements is essential. In short, writing is not easy.

Unfortunately television imposes stricter rules and offers, *at the moment*, a more limited market than almost any other form of writing. (This will not always be so, and the opposite may soon be true!) A short story, for instance, may be sold to any one of roughly ten first-class magazines, or, failing that, to any one of perhaps twenty others. An original television script — even assuming it has been written with imagination and skill — has, at the most, four or five possible markets. If it is an hour-long show — a job, incidentally, almost as difficult as writing a Broadway play — it will probably not sell at all, as most hour TV programs buy only from a "stable" of writers who contribute regularly and by contract.

Let's assume then that we have a half-hour television script. If it does not involve murder and suspense, all neatly patterned to a formula for chills, it may sell to *Lux Video*, *Circle Theatre*, or to one of the TV-film-producing companies in Hollywood. However, *Circle Theatre* has its own very specific requirements, and if our play is suitable for *Circle*, it very likely will not satisfy *Lux*. Result: the field of markets is

narrowed even more. (This was not true even a very few months ago, and it will not be true in the future. A short time ago programs using straight, non-murder material included *Bigelow*, *Starlight*, *Theatre of Romance*, *Silver Theatre*, etc. But for some reason having to do with current violent tastes on the part of the public, these excellent entertainments failed to hold sufficient interest to compete with the chillers.)

This is not to say that all the half-hour shows do not want material. The fact is that they need it desperately. No medium yet devised devours more stories than television. Nor do I mean to say that a first-rate play patterned to the requirements of these shows would not sell. But I do mean to say that the play must fit that particular pattern, or formula. This then is where the study comes in. Know the program. Take it apart, week after week; analyze each scene and the manner in which it progresses the story-line. Be sure *your*

down now and techniques are improving, expanding; but roughly speaking, here are a few rules: a half-hour show should not use more than three or four sets, small ones; very few actors, four or five principals, several extras if necessary; and above all a straightforward story-line with no flashbacks or sub-plotting. It should be a story that does not require too much "exposition" or explanation; it should be "visual" and dynamic, not static and talky, moving toward a definite climax and solution. And for a half-hour show the length must not exceed twenty-three minutes!

Since the use of motion-picture film — today — involves extra cost that is astronomical, most budgets outlaw its use entirely. Remember too that a character cannot wake up in bed in pajamas and three or four seconds later appear in an office in a business suit: it is a physical impossibility. Time must be allowed for costume changes, but this time cannot simply "cover" — it is valuable and must



Shubert Alley, Troupe 574, Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland, Ohio, Sister Mary St. Louis, Director.

story is fresh and original. Then sit down and write — write hard and long. Then revise. And revise again. Only then may you send off your script with any amount of hope.

On the other hand, what about those murder shows? *Suspense*, *Lights Out*, *The Clock*, *Danger*, *The Web*. Each seems similar to the other; yet, in subtle ways, each is slightly different. It remains true, however, that melodrama, with intense and mounting suspense involving a sympathetic character in some unusual but credible danger, is the most likely story to sell on the present market. (This is a sad comment on current tastes, but we are concerned with facts, not opinions.)

To set down here in any detail the special requirements and limitations of any good television play is impossible because of space. But the hopeful writer would do well to remember that television is distinct from both the radio and the movies. The limitations are breaking

move the story forward. There is no time and no space for anything extraneous, no matter how funny or appealing.

Assume then that the script is completed to the best of the writer's ability. Is there even a chance that it will be read by the proper people? One of the two largest networks has recently announced that it will not even consider a script unless submitted by a reputable agent. Is this too bleak a picture for the newcomer without an agent? Yes and no. The strange and incongruous thing is that most agents, all advertising agencies (the producers of most shows), and the networks themselves need material badly. And they would as soon buy that material from John Q. Jones of Ypsilanti as from an established TV writer in New York. The difficulty is that the New York writer has an agent and probably knows the techniques thoroughly.

(Continued on page 30)

THEATRE on the AIR

By JUNE MITCHELL

THIS series of articles on *Theatre after Graduation*, concerning the various ways in which you can continue your dramatics work after you leave high school, would not be complete without a discussion of the definite phase of theatre which exists in broadcasting.

Radio is a permanent part of the American way of life. On January 1, 1952, there were over 103 million radio sets in America — more in the United States than in all the rest of the world combined. Television is a comparatively new baby. Of all the communicative arts TV alone has developed within your lifetime. You have had an opportunity to watch it grow from nothing into a nation-wide industry. You have seen TV change our living-rooms, our style of clothes and furniture, our vocabularies and even our pattern of living.

Radio and TV then are important forces in our lives. Unquestionably, actors on these two mediums reach a much wider and more diversified audience than do Broadway casts. While theatre people worry about audiences decreasing, broadcasting continues to reach everybody.

The stage acting which you have been studying in high school is certainly nearer to television acting than it is to acting on the radio. However, since radio is a much older and more settled field, let us discuss radio acting first.

The most obvious difference between radio acting and stage acting is that as a radio actor you must be capable of creating all your effects with your voice. Your ability at pantomime and facial expression is completely wasted on a microphone. It is true that this complete dependence on voice does have some advantage. The actor doesn't have to look the part. Thus the unattractive girl can play the beautiful heroine; an older person can play a young child; and so on.

Aside from your ability to do a good acting-reading job, there are certain personality traits which you must develop if you hope for success on radio. One is a sense of timing—timing not only as actors know it in the delivery of a line, but a sense of clock time. Everything is done to split-second timing. On radio there is no such thing as a late curtain. A program begins at a certain second whether you are ready or not, and it ends at a certain second whether or not you have finished your material. You must be constantly aware of the clock. You must develop a sense of just how long a half hour really is and what can be accomplished in it. You must be punctual not

only at broadcasts, but at rehearsals. All rehearsal time at a studio is paid for in actors' salaries in hours, not in weeks as are stage rehearsals. If you are five minutes late to a radio rehearsal, your salary is docked.

Second is a sense of co-operation — of the give-and-take necessary to work closely with other people. The group who put a show on the air, because of the pressure of time, the close quarters, the tension, must be a very tightly knit team. The slightest friction will disrupt the whole program.

You will not be able to judge whether or not a career in radio acting is for you until you get a closer look at it. While you are still in high school, find out something about the workings of the studio itself. Visit the local radio station. Ask your high school director to organize a trip to the studio of the nearest large station. You will be astonished at the difference between what you hear and what you see.

If you like what you find at the studios, if the atmosphere of broadcasting appeals to you, carry your investigations further. Spend as much time at your local station as you can without making a nuisance of yourself. If it is a very small station, you may even be allowed to help with the routine work.

The main thing to find out right now is whether or not you like working in a radio studio. If the answer is yes, then take a good look at yourself to see if you have the potential ability.

Let us suppose that you decide to take a chance. Then what? . . . Then you get yourself trained and you get yourself educated. First, you go to college.

Again I say to you, don't make the mistake of trying to go into your acting career directly from high school. The job inventory prepared by the Personnel De-

partment of the National Broadcasting Company lists the qualifications for all its various positions. Over and over again you read the words, "college degree."

Don't be fooled by the apparent simplicity of what you hear coming out of your radio. Before you think, "That's easy, I could do that," remember that what you hear is a very small part of what's going on. Rosalind Roulston¹ compares broadcasting to an iceberg — so little of it is above water compared to what lies hidden under the surface. What you see in an iceberg is comparable to what you hear in a radio broadcast — 10% talent, 90% preparation and training.

Often we have had students enroll at Emerson on a leave of absence from a fairly good radio job because they have suddenly realized — or the station itself has insisted — that they've gone as far as they can go without a college degree.

How shall you choose your college? Pick a liberal arts college with a strong broadcasting department. Then check two things: first, do the instructors in the broadcasting department have a professional background — that is, are they, or have they been, actively engaged in professional broadcasting? Second, does the college have its own broadcasting station? Only by actually running a station — under supervision of course — will the students learn the real problems of radio and how to solve them.

You should have no great trouble locating a suitable college. In most states you will find at least one large university which is beginning to make a major project not only of radio, but of TV.

Once you get to college, besides your broadcasting courses take all you can get

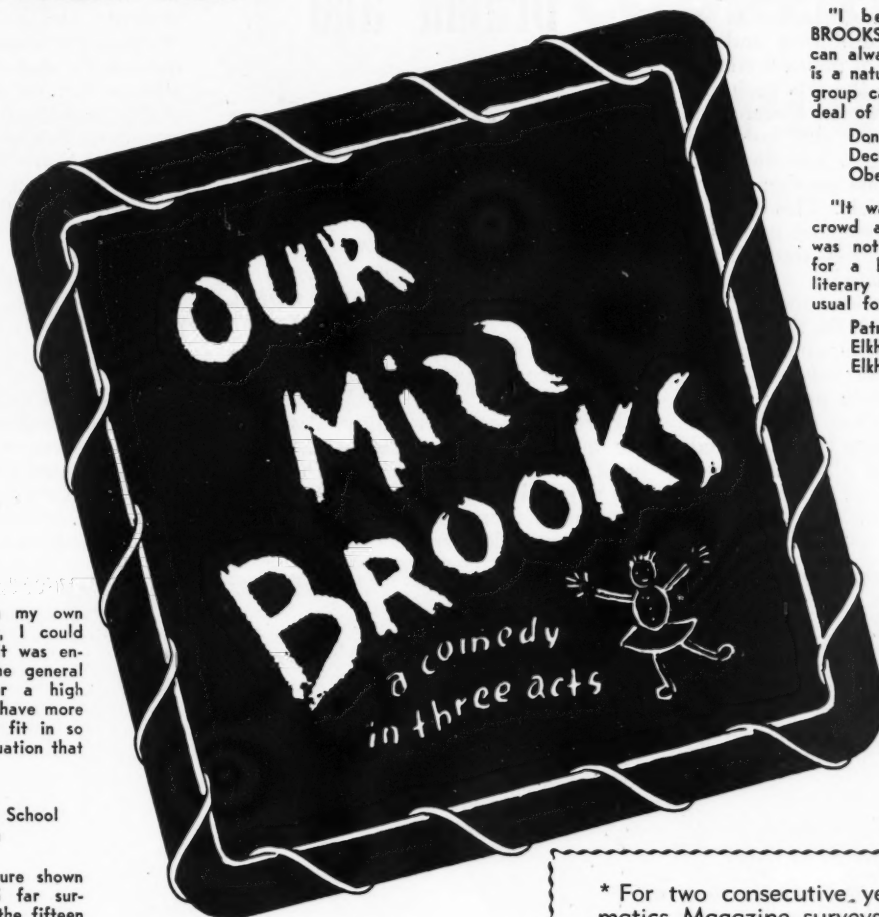
(Continued on page 29)

¹ Rosalind Roulston, Television instructor at Emerson College, who provided me with much valuable information in the preparation of this article.



The Glorious Hour, Troupe 949, Ward High School, Kansas City, Kans., Sister Elizabeth Ann, Sponsor.

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PLAY OF THEM ALL*



"For the first time, in my own mind, without reservations, I could say, 'A job well done!' It was enjoyed by everyone and the general reaction was, 'Perfect for a high school play. We ought to have more of that kind of play.' It fit in so well with our own local situation that it was unbelievable."

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Branch Township High School
Llewellyn, Pennsylvania

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"OUR MISS BROOKS is the perfect teen-age play. It is bright, gay, easy to stage. The parts are well distributed and the situations are easily within the understanding of young actors."

Clarence J. Hart
Centerville High School
Centerville, Iowa

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Ona E. Sabby
High School
Lusk, Wyoming

"We played to capacity houses both performances. We heard many compliments on the clever lines and situations, emphasizing the 'naturalness' and realism in both. I felt it was a good comedy—full of laughable situations, fast-moving, interesting. It is one of the most successful plays I have directed."

Dorothy Bradish
Plainfield High School
Plainfield, Illinois

"The action was quick and fast moving, the characters were well developed, the dialogue was clean, and the plot was skillfully interwoven so that the audience was kept entertained. The audience enjoyed the play immensely. Laughs came easily and often. . ."

Herbert J. Brine, Sr.
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"This was the easiest play I have ever produced."

Mrs. Dorothy A. Lynch
McClain High School
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"It was a natural . . . Especially suitable for a high school cast. The setting, a contrast from the typical living room, was a relief."

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"I believe that OUR MISS BROOKS is a play that a director can always count on being a hit. It is a natural situation that any school group can do well without a great deal of worry."

Donna D. Brown
Decatur Community High School
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"It was outstanding! The largest crowd a class play ever drew. It was not only a perfect adaptation for a high school group, but its literary value is high, which is unusual for a high school play."

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Elkhorn High School
Elkhorn, Wisconsin

* For two consecutive years official Dramatics Magazine surveys have found this play to be the most popular with Thespian directors everywhere.

It is a 3 act comedy for 12w, 5m, 1 int. set. Playbooks cost 85c each and the royalty is \$35.00 for the first performance.

"Good comedy, natural situations, lots of fun, real characterizations."

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"I have been very successful with all The Dramatic Publishing Company plays I have used, and this is one that cast, director and audience thought was hard to beat."

Eula Phillips
Rawlins Public Schools
Rawlins, Wyoming

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WHENEVER we think of or discuss drama and its allied arts, we commonly think of the dance, music, design, costuming and art as is generally denoted to such things as painting, drawing, sculpturing and its allied fields. The idea of physical education as a co-partner in the arts to drama perhaps may or may not have been considered. To delve into the historical background of these two activities and their relationship to one another is not the purpose of this article. This is not a history. Let us, however, not minimize its importance. It has been through the ages, and still is, co-related.

We are here to consider the correlation as it presents itself in the schools today. Therefore it becomes necessary to consider the many factors involved. The limitations of this article makes it imperative that only a few of these factors be discussed. The points to be covered are (1) the building of physical fitness; (2) the development of coordination; (3) the development of teamwork; (4) the development of a sense of responsi-

WORKING TOGETHER

Drama and Physical Education

By MAX GOBEL

will regard the term *physical fitness* as competence — physical adaptiveness toward an end or aim.

First let us consider agility. Agility is the quickness and readiness of movement. In whatever activity we choose in our physical education program we find some association in dramatic activity in regard to agile movement. We could

miss a great opportunity when not observing the acquisition of agility in physical education and applying it to their work. The physical educator and his students can gain immeasurably from studying the acquisition of agility as it is used on the stage. Some, particularly the athletic director and athlete, may scoff at this co-relation but it may be well to remember that such institutions as West Point and Notre Dame have incorporated the "sissy" activity of the dance into their "he-man" football training. Needless to say, the dance is the basis and origin of all drama.

Agility is not the whole consideration of our discussion of physical fitness. It also includes posture and gait. In interviewing many first-line athletes it has been found by this writer that in many cases the athlete learned proper posture and gait after gaining proper movement in one or several sports. "I learned to walk and stand properly after I learned to run," was the comment of a track star. Consensus of others was generally the same. The drama instructor and student



Jane Eyre, Troupe 684, McKinley High School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Patricia Smith, Director.

bility; and (5) the integration of the two programs in the school.

The use of the term *physical fitness* must go beyond the idea of just good health as based upon age and organic fitness. Many of us are in excellent or good health. But this does not necessarily make us physically fit for all tasks. We cannot assume that one who has worked mostly at mental tasks can be expected to handle hundred-pound sacks of grain as if they were a mere ten pounds. Physical fitness even goes beyond the slinging of sacks of grain. The grid star may be physically fit for a full 60 minutes of playing time but may not last 50 yards in a swim contest. Notice how we are wont to speak of physical fitness for football, for swimming, for track, for driving, for traveling, and, yes, for studying. We must then look at physical fitness in the sense in which it applies to physical education and its correlation to drama. We

argue the acceptability of the type of agility required. That can be and is a moot question at all times. Suffice it to say that all agility, no matter how acquired or how used, can be applied interchangeably within the dramatic and the physical educational spheres.

How is this agility attained? Practice. The answer is not as simple as that one word implies. We can practice the wrong thing until it becomes so ingrained a habit that unlearning alone would require often more work than the original learning. Thus in our physical education program we have the coach or teacher to instruct us on correctness of movement in acquiring agility. Drama has the director to acquaint us with the proper movements. Where in either the drama program or the physical education program can we honestly say that the agility in one is of no benefit to the other? The drama director and student

may well ask themselves the question: "What is it that each sport activity requires in movement and stance that is applicable to walking and standing?" In reverse the coach and athlete may ask themselves the question relative to the drama students' movements on stage.

Physical adaptiveness immediately recalls the idea of coordination. Truly, these two are inseparable, as are the two other points of teamwork and responsibility. What do we mean when we speak of coordination? In coordination we must think of the harmonious, integrated reaction of the various parts and processes, internally as well as externally, in maintaining their proper relationship. This automatically gives us timing, rhythm, and relaxation. It doesn't matter whether we consider timing (called pacing in some activities) as part of rhythm and the two again as part of relaxation. As in

(Continued on page 28)



Bob Breaw and Gail Robinson, in *Tom Sawyer*, Troupe 791, Minot, N. D., Sr. High School, William Robinson, Director.

COOPERATION PLUS!

By LOUISE C. HORTON

THESPIAN TROUPE 664 at Harvey High School, Painesville, Ohio, has its eye on children's theatre, the Painesville Junior Chorus in particular. In its fourth year, this group, under the direction of Mrs. Irene Homsher, worked without financial assistance until 1952 when its productions were sponsored by the Recreation Department. It has won and held the interest of the high school members of Le Masque Club at Harvey High School and Thespian Troupe 664.

The Junior Chorus is a combination of two groups, the Chorus itself and the Jack and Jill Players. The first was organized in 1948; the second, in 1949. Many members of the original groups are now in high school and Thespian members. John Perrault of Troupe 664 managed *The Clown Who Ran Away* for the Junior Chorus last November and will also stage manage their March show, a *Tom Sawyer* operetta.

Membership of Junior Chorus includes students from the four elementary schools in Painesville, the parochial and the junior high school.

Their year's program includes one play and one operetta. The group has classes on Tuesdays and Saturday mornings. Last Christmas they produced two one-act plays to such fine response that they will be included in their new schedule for next year.

The group has also appeared on television three times and made three thirty-minute tape recordings for radio. They have made numerous benefit appearances. The age range of the members is ten to fourteen. The combination of music in the operetta and the drama makes this group a bit different from most children's theatres.

A child's natural instinct for theatre is appreciated by the director, Mrs. Homsher. She says: "Let's teach theatre to the children. Certainly they are eager to learn any part of stage business." She

also continues to say: "The drawback is that most directors are unwilling to undertake a community group because it's risky, financially." However, the success of the Painesville Junior Chorus should encourage other directors interested in community children's theatre to follow in Mrs. Homsher's footsteps.

Another Thespian Troupe which has discovered the rewarding fun in children's theatre work is Troupe 783, Washington High School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, under the direction of L. R. Kremer.

Mr. Kremer reports for the season: "Children's theatre to an audience of 10,000 was the record of Washington High School." With the cooperation of the grade schools, this Troupe presented five performances of *Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater*, all in the high school auditorium. Also they gave seven performances of *The Land of the Dragon*. Four of the seven performances were trouped. Three

casts prepared *Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater*.

Using more than one cast to present children's plays is a good way to give more and more Thespians an opportunity to experience the thrill and the benefits of performing for a child audience. Also each cast will strive to do its very best to keep on a par with the others and not to let the child audience down.

A group of housewives and mothers in Dearborn, Michigan, banded together five years ago for the purpose of presenting "live theatre for school children." They called themselves The Dearborn Players Guild and the first year presented eight performances of *The Wizard of Oz* to about 3000 youngsters, accompanied by their parents.

This year the group's presentation will be *The Princess and the Swineherd* and they will troupe it for 32 performances. They expect to play to 16,000 children. Their first performance is given in the Dearborn Playhouse. After that they move to various schools. They have also played for the St. Francis Home for Orphan Boys, the Protestant Children's Home of Detroit and the Sarah Fisher Home.

The membership is 150 and the women do all the work connected with their theatre. General chairman is Mrs. Carl Poosch; director is Mrs. Ronald Dayne.

This group too double casts, as 32 performances is quite an order. It takes time and energy to prepare, cast, rehearse and present such a production, and then to troupe it, especially for busy housewives. Yet children's theatre is so important in their minds that they willingly make sacrifices so that the children may enjoy live drama.

Of interest to American Children's Theatre directors and members is the presence on this continent of John Allen of London, England. He is at present in Canada, working on the Dominion Drama Festival. Mr. Allen was formerly director of Glyndebourne's Children Theatre, Ltd., and is now head of the newly formed English Children's Theatre Committee.



One Foot in Heaven, Coachella Valley Union High School (Troupe 562), Coachella, Calif., Elaine Buttrud, Sponsor.

Staging SIGHT UNSEEN

By ROBERTA SEIBERT

SIGHT UNSEEN, a comedy in three acts by Rosemary Foster and Warner Law. Five men and six women. One set. Modern and period costumes. Royalty \$25. Samuel French, 25 West 45th St., New York 36, N. Y.

Suitability

IF YOU'RE looking for a good farce with challenging characterizations, good dialogue and a clever plot, *Sight Unseen* is a play to investigate. Our students were so enthusiastic about the show that we wondered why others hadn't tried it. Then we realized that it was probably that it had never had a Broadway production. Don't be misled by this fact. *Sight Unseen* will sell itself when you read it, and best of all it is good, clean, wholesome fun. The smoking and drinking can easily be cut because they are not essential to the plot or characters. The swearing can be omitted, or substitutions, such as "I'll be dashed," "accursed," and "Great Scott," can be used. Such substitutions actually add to Archie's character of the stuffed shirt.

Plot

Sight Unseen is the story of an English girl, Lady Judith, who is trying to sell Barnsley Manor, which has 60 rooms and four ghosts. In the first act the ghosts scare off a prospective buyer, a school mistress named Potter. However, when Mrs. Malone, an American buyer with an interest in psychic research is found, the ghosts refuse to appear. Judith persuades



Sight Unseen, Troupe 191, Webster Groves, Mo., High School, Roberta Seibert, Director.

Archie Andrews (whom we re-named Reggie because of the comic strip character), her real estate agent and fiancé, to dress up as one of the ghosts. When the ghosts show up Archie as a fake, Mrs. Malone's nephew, Henry, who has fallen in love with Judith, is greatly disappointed in Judith, and he and his aunt prepare to leave. The ghosts, in their concern for Judith's romance, materialize; Mrs. Malone decides to buy the house, which Judith does not want her to have now; and the ghosts have to resort to attempted murder before Judith is allowed to turn the house over to the government for a museum and to decide in favor of Henry.

Casting

The casting of the six women, four men and one bit was handled by the try-out method for all of the characters except the bit and Mat, the ghost who has no lines. The bit is really a walk-on, an American Indian called Bleating Hawk. In casting, we selected opposite physical types for Archie and Henry; for Mrs. Malone and Lady Hortense, the

Elizabethan ghost; for Judith and Lady Penelope, the 17th century ghost; for Miss Potter and Etta, Lady Judith's housekeeper; and for Mat, the stable boy, and his master, the General, a Cavalier. Contrast in voices are important, although no particular voice is needed for any of the characters.

Rehearsals

After the speaking parts were cast, we had first a reading rehearsal to try out Mat's pantomime. We had twenty-one rehearsals plus three dress rehearsals. Rehearsals usually lasted two hours; however, the lovers were rehearsed alone in a continuing session after the regular rehearsal period. We divided the play into sections according to the actors needed for scenes, so that the entire cast was only at rehearsals when necessary. This not only gave them more free time during the five-week rehearsal period, but simplified the discipline. During the last week, run-throughs gave the show unity, but in the meantime the various sections were paced differently and the resulting effect was greater variety of pace within the show. For the most part this show was played fast and, because it is farce, quite broadly.

Directing

Special problems for the actors which should be considered were numerous, but challenging and quite surmountable. The mortals could not see the ghosts except as the script dictated; hence greater concentration than usual was necessary. The actors tended to look away from the ghosts when not seeing them, rather than looking through them. This had to be avoided. The mortals cannot hear the ghosts and when thus taking their cues from the ghosts, apparently took them from mortals; hence more pantomime than usual was necessary to fill the supposed pauses.

Lady Judith, Miss Potter and Archie had British accents. The ghosts did not have pronounced accents because we



Another scene from Webster Groves' *Sight Unseen*.

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assumed that our 16th and 17th century ancestors spoke differently from the modern Britisher. Etta could have a trace of Cockney or Yorkshire in her speech, enough to stamp her as lower middle class. Suggested accents can be more effective than a variety of pronounced but inconsistent accents.

The ghosts had the additional chore of wearing period costumes gracefully. Penelope was as light as a feather as she danced the minuet with the awkward stable boy, Mat. Lady Hortense had to be able to move quickly up and down stairs and sit gracefully in a farthingale. The General had to manage his sword with ease, although his fencing monologue did not need to be too convincing because he's like Falstaff, brave only in re-creating his alleged battles. Lady Penelope needed special work to master her court curtsy and the language of the fan. Each of these challenges excited the members of our cast when they realized that they could learn them quickly. They were practiced as soon as the books were out of the actor's hands so that they became a part of the characterization.

Stage Problems

The setting for *Sight Unseen* gave the impression of an English manor house with high ceilings and massive construction. The staircase was sturdy enough to help Archie make an effective stage fall. The suggested floor plan in the play book was excellent. Because of our tiny stage we placed the fireplace in the

fourth wall, but that was the only change we found necessary. Our walls were panelled to the top of the door and were dark green plaster above. This enabled us to conceal the kitchen door in the panelling, making Mat's first entrance more startling. The solid color made a good background for the four portraits, copies of Old Masters which were done in oil on 24" x 36" pieces of masonite given a basic coating of white lead first. Two were necessary for the plot; two were for atmosphere. The stained glass windows were painted in water color on ordinary shelf paper. The black leading was put on with India ink and the paper was then brushed with linseed oil which gave a translucent effect. A mounted suit of armor for atmosphere was rented from the local costume company, furniture was borrowed from homes, and old tapestries were hung on the walls. In selecting furniture we avoided Victorian and American styles. Careful attention to detail was more important for an effective setting than the amount we had to spend. It took ingenuity and persistence to find exactly the right furniture. We were helped by the fifty cent pamphlets put out by the Chicago Art Institute on the Thorne miniature rooms. They were quite useful in showing students what we needed and the general effect we hoped to create. The properties other than furniture were easy to locate. *Sight Unseen* was not a difficult prop show.

Lighting

A candle wall bracket, the stained glass windows, a fender with logs and lamp attached, an old glass chandelier and two lamps provided light motivation. The lighting was simple to operate because only the floodlight was on the dimmer. It would be possible to do the show with no dimmers, although master switches would be helpful for the blackouts. We used six baby spots and eight large spots with surprise pink and chocolate gelatins. We were careful to keep the light off the walls and subdued. Because real candles were used for the seance scenes, none of the costumes were of flimsy materials.

Music

Although no music was indicated in the script, music for the minuet at the end of the first scene provided a better curtain. We used a cello and piano recording, Schubert's *Three Minuets* arranged by Piatigorsky and recorded by Columbia Masterworks 72373-D. We introduced it as Penelope said, "I feel so gay, so very gay." The volume increased when she asked Mat to dance and the record was cut off before her line, "The music has stopped." This recording had three cuts. We used the second one first and when the imaginary King asked her to dance, we used the first cut which is more stately than the second.

Make-up

The mortals had straight and character
(Continued on page 27)

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

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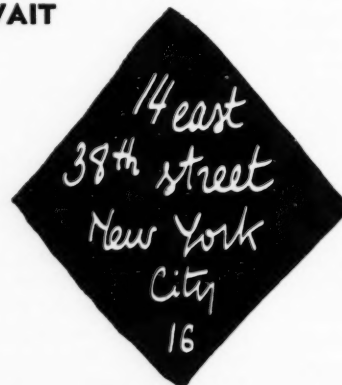
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THEATRE on BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

DRAMATICS readers who have grown weary of my monthly complaint about the Broadway theatre can take heart—things are looking up hereabouts. I am about to be quite pleasant about some of the recent arrivals. We have had both more and finer productions, several important new talents have come to the fore and three legitimate theatres have been reclaimed from radio and/or television.

George Tabori is a fairly recent figure among the playwrights of our theatre though he has been well known to European audiences. His *Flight into Egypt* had a brief run last season, but it won many admirers for Mr. Tabori. Robert Whitehead, in association with the Playwrights' Company, has produced Tabori's newest play, *The Emperor's Clothes*. It is a very interesting play and the production, sterling. The title stems from the legend of the clear-sighted lad who had the frankness to realize and to proclaim that the Emperor was nude.

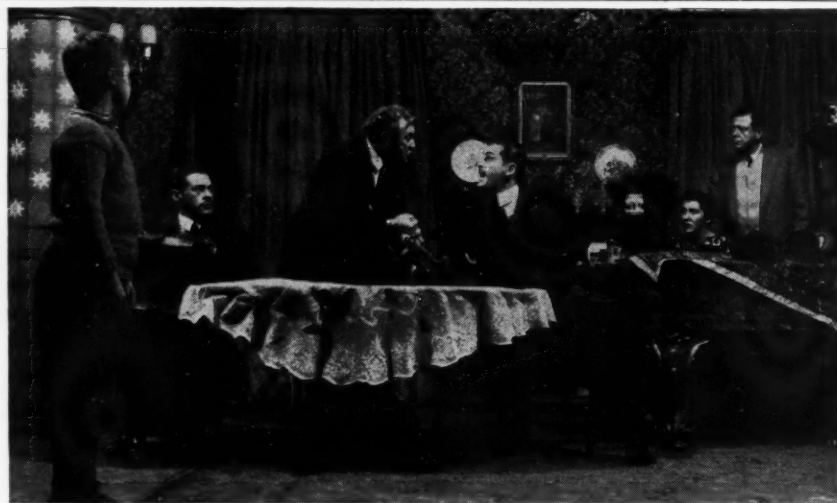
The action of *The Emperor's Clothes* takes place in Budapest during one winter day in 1930. The forces of totalitarianism that were soon to sweep over all of Europe are just beginning to be felt. Conditions have become serious enough, however, for minority groups and for outspoken liberals such as Elek Odry. Odry and his wife, Bella, live in a climate of fear that is not shared by their son Ferike. The latter is a serious student of American detective and cowboy heroes and his fanciful tales arouse the suspicion of the police. One of the most effective scenes in the drama is that in which the Rottenbiller brothers, two of the most dreaded of the police force, cross-examine the Odry family regarding their confederates, Cactus Jack, Nick Carter and other American agents. The accompanying illustration shows a climax in that interrogation as the web of evidence tightens more securely around the almost incredulous Elek. This is his home—he is a responsible citizen—things like this can't happen to him. His brother Peter who has always championed an unpopular cause knows what a little power can do. He had warned of just such a turn of events, but he too is shaken by the incident. Mr. Tabori's play is a tremendously powerful indictment of totalitarian governments.

Lee J. Cobb, who came to the fore a few seasons ago with *Death of a Salesman* (though a great many of us had recognized his strength long before) is giving a wonderful performance. Elek Odry is not so magnificent a role as Willy Loman, but it is one in which Mr. Cobb is given great opportunity to show his range. Maureen Stapleton, also a recent star via *The Rose Tattoo*, does very well as his wife. Their son is enacted by Brandon de Wilde, whom many of you have seen in either the stage or the screen versions of Carson McCuller's *The Member of the Wedding*. Last season this sensitive young player appeared with Helen Hayes in *Mrs. McThing*. Anthony Ross and Esmond Knight head the supporting cast—all under the able direction of Harold Clurman. The play shows that Mr. Tabori has made great gains in dramatic ability. His is a talent that should be encouraged to keep working for the stage.

After considerable debate, announcements of all kinds from all manner of sources, hectic appeals for funds and public support, cancellations, postpone-

his production of that play at his home base. One can only admire the fortitude of the playgoers of Cambridge for taking to this dreadfully dull comedy. It is my habit before attending a production of a rarely done work to read the play before going. I had not coped with *Love's Labour's Lost* since a college Shakespeare course, so I went over it a night or two before journeying out to the City Center. Upon concluding it, I remarked to my wife the same words that Brooks Atkinson used as the prelude to his review in the *NEW YORK TIMES* of February 5th: "I can see why this play has not been revived since 1891."

I shall always be grateful to the New York City Theatre Company for giving me an opportunity to see a production of this very weak work of the Bard. I shall be just as grateful if no one attempts it again during my playgoing career. It is the most pointless, witless, uninteresting fabrication that one can imagine. The King of Navarre and three of his lords have pledged themselves to a period of contemplation during which they must forego the company of ladies. That very



A scene from *The Emperor's Clothes* by George Tabori under the direction of Harold Clurman.

ments, etc., etc., etc., the New York City Theatre Company finally came forth with a season of plays at the municipally operated barn on West 55th Street. Opera and ballet have had their innings at the City Center and the drama lovers were beginning to feel that they were a much-put-upon group of persons when those responsible for the theatre announced that a theatre season would be provided. Lincoln Kirstein is the managing director of the City Center this season and Albert Marre is serving as the artistic director of the New York City Theatre Company.

The season has been launched with a rarely performed work of Shakespeare's, *Love's Labour's Lost*. Mr. Marre, who has been directing the fortunes of the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had considerable success with

day the Princess of France and three of her beauteous ladies arrive to avail themselves of Navarre's hospitality. The results of the encounter can be guessed and Shakespeare takes an interminable time to get these results.

Mr. Marre has tried to inject liveliness into the proceedings by doing the play as an Edwardian one. It is his custom at the Brattle Theatre, I understand, to do a play in several ways. He may for example run *Love's Labour's Lost* for a time set in the Edwardian period and then re-stage and re-design the same play in the Renaissance or some other period. Doing the work at the turn of the century gives opportunity for injecting a certain note of nostalgia that many find appealing. An early model automobile, costumes that many can recall donning and that remind the rest of us of

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An excellent cast has been assembled for the revival. Joseph Schildkraut plays the eccentric Spaniard, Kevin McCarthy and Meg Mundy seem to have landed in the wrong century but they struggle most bravely as Biron and Rosaline. Fred Gwynne rather overacts as Dull, a constable who emerges as a Keystone Kop. William McIver was horribly precocious (not cute) as the Spaniard's page, Moth. More was lost than the labours of love upon this undertaking.

I think, however, the municipal theatre will redeem itself with the following two items of the season. During the week ahead they will premiere a revival of Shaw's *Misalliance* with Barry Jones, Tamara Geva, Roddy McDowall and Richard Kiley. Shaw's dissertation on the problems that arise in the relationship between parents and children is a genuinely amusing one. The Master of Malvern could ask no better proof of his oft-stated pre-eminence over Shakespeare than by having his play tread upon the heels of *Love's Labour's Lost*. To even the score, the final offering will be one of the Bard's most forceful works, *The Merchant of Venice*. Luther Adler will essay the role of Shylock. It is good to have the New York City Theatre season under way. Our theatre never offers theatregoers a better bargain.

Menasha Skulnick has long been a favorite in the Yiddish and visitors to the show-shops of lower Second Avenue have come back with glowing accounts of his talent. These tales can be believed by those who have visited Sylvia Regan's *The Fifth Season*, in which he is making his English speaking debut. The play is weak, but it offers Mr. Skulnick many opportunities to show how diversified his tricks are for getting an audience to laugh.

The action of the play is set in the office of Goodwin-Pincus on New York's Seventh Avenue, the center of the ladies' apparel industry. The title is derived from a saying in that industry that there are five seasons: e.g., summer, autumn, winter, spring and slack. Goodwin-Pincus seem to have a chronic state of fifth season and the play shows some of the

dodges they must employ to stay in business. A subsidiary plot relates the troubles of Mr. Goodwin's marital life.

The Fifth Season is not the riotous comedy of the dress industry that *Room Service* was of the shoestring theatrical producer, but it does afford a very amusing evening in the theatre. Menasha Skulnick is a great clown, and Richard Whorf as his business partner is an excellent foil. Under the direction of Gregory Ratoff, a very able cast imparts to the audience all of the fun in Miss Regan's well-fitted script.

Victor Moore has scored the biggest hit of his career since he created Vice-President Throttlebottom in *Of Thee I Sing*. He is playing the beloved Gramps in a revival of Paul Osborn's hit of the '30's, *On Borrowed Time*. Many of you must know this tender story of how a grandfather holds off death until he is sure the future of his grandson, Pud, is assured to be a happy one. You will recall that he trees Mr. Brink and keeps him aloft until he has attended to all of the details that involve Pud and the family.

The role was played in the original production by Dudley Digges and he left an indelible impression. Mr. Moore, however, seems destined to make the role as much his as is Throttlebottom or the Rev. Mr. Moon of *Anything Goes*. William Hawkins went so far as to proclaim in his review in the New York *WORLD TELEGRAM AND SUN*: "Once in a long time in the theatre, one is lucky enough to see the magical meeting of perfect actor for perfect role. Not another attraction on Broadway more admirably fulfills what it sets out to do."

This high praise has been echoed by most of the other aisle-sitters. It is Victor Moore's hit, but he is ably seconded by Beulah Bondi and Leo G. Carroll. The revival was staged by Marshall Jamison and presented under the auspices of Richard Krakeur and Randolph Hale in association with William G. Costin, Jr.

Off-Broadway activity has increased too. The Equity-Community Theatre, the outgrowth of the Equity-Library Theatre, has inaugurated its fourth season with Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness*. These plays are presented first under Equity-Library Theatre auspices in the Lenox Hill Playhouse and then the best of these plays tour outlying sections of our vast metropolis as Equity-Community Theatre offerings. It is a good deal for both cast and audience . . . one vastly benefits the other.

The Circle in the Square down in Greenwich Village must be proud of Geraldine Page's success in *Mid-Summer* at the Vanderbilt Theatre. They must, however, miss her every time they present their production of Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*. The production, nonetheless, will have given its 300th performance before you read this and

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seems set for many weeks to come. Near the Sheridan Square home of Circle in the Square, the Greenwich Mews Players are presenting a new work, *Monday's Heroes*, by Les Pine. Until recently, this group had been inviting audiences to their excellent production of *Widower's Houses*, which I reviewed for you last fall. Several miles northward, the Columbia Players at the University of that name, are presenting an arena style production of Giraudoux's *The Enchanted*. I hope to see the latter before we next meet in these pages.

As has been seen, there has been nothing the matter with the theatre that a few good productions couldn't cure. The weeks ahead look just as promising. Within a few days a new play by William Inge, the author of *Come Back, Little Sheba*, will bow at the Music Box. Mr. Inge's new work is entitled *Picnic* and will feature Janice Rule, Peggy Conklin and Ralph Meeker. *Maggie*, a musical based upon James Matthew Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, will also debut this week. Last evening, Paul Gregory's setting of Benet's *John Brown's Body* with Judith Anderson, Raymond Massey and Tyrone Power opened. This is a reading in the same manner as Mr. Gregory brought us in the First Drama Quartette in the *Don Juan in Hell* sequence from Shaw's *Man and Superman*. It is good to have such a vital theatre once again. Long may it so remain!

DIALING AROUND

By SI MILLS

WHEN this column in the January issue of *DRAMATICS* said that the promise of television is still in the future, it was not unaware of a new program *Omnibus* in which are planted the seeds of many necessary improvements and innovations. The fact that the new series had been hailed enthusiastically by critics was not enough, since critics don't support shows. But now the ideas propounded have taken firmer hold. The public has approved heartily; and sponsors seem eager to be associated with the show.

Omnibus is the child of the Ford Radio-TV Workshop and is being done right now on a limited-time basis, 26 weeks to be exact. Whether or not it will continue depends on several factors, chief among them being the willingness of sponsors to take over completely the cost of running the enterprise. (Originally the Ford Foundation allocated two million dollars for this lengthy test. Then five "participating, non-competitive" sponsors were brought in. Whether or not these sponsors relieved the foundation of all financial burden I do not know. Does "participating" mean with each other or with the foundation?) Whatever the arrangement, television (and radio) stands to gain a good deal. This has been a lesson not so much in techniques as in format, organization, use of commercials and activities of a master of ceremonies.

In stating the reason for producing *Omnibus* as a commercial television

series, Mr. Robert Saudek, director of the Workshop, said, "Television is already a major mass medium capable of reaching nearly 18,000,000 American families. The broadest practical use of this medium today can be made only through commercially operated stations. In order to reach a large segment of the audience, the Workshop decided to make a popular series available to those stations on a commercially attractive basis.

"At the same time, *Omnibus* is adequately financed to afford the audience high standards of entertainment and is of such length—90 minutes weekly—that a variety of features may be presented. No feature within *Omnibus* will be interrupted by commercial messages.

"Many of the items presented will be in the nature of 'showcasing' programs that may eventually find their own place in network schedules, but which merit special introduction because of their originality and quality. Wide latitude is being given to creators of individual fea-

tures to insure a high performance level."

There would seem to be little to quarrel with in such a statement. No viewer would complain about a program with adequate financing and high ideals. There is an implied error, however. The idea would appear to be that commercial TV could do a much more capable job than the "educational" type. No one is disputing that. The points of conflict between the two are nil as far as I can see. The aim here is to offer the audience "high standards of entertainment." Good! The audience can use that. But educational video is not aimed so much at entertaining as at instructing. There is no competition. Commercial video is being forced into action by mistaken notions. It is blinded by what it considers a threat (mistakenly) and the public is gaining thereby.

Many times in the past I have ranted about over-commercialization. No doubt we have to pay the piper if we are to dance; but the price has been reached less by agreement than by arbitrary one-sidedness. A sponsor, having footed the bill, is in the position to dictate. And the situation has reached the point where good taste and sense are forgotten. You know, when hearing a half-hour dramatic show (which actually is enacted in slightly more than two-thirds the time. Time it!) that there will be breaks for commercials at approximately ten-minute intervals. That means that regardless of the author's intent, there must be minor climaxes at fixed spots. The story is being forced into a definite shape.

One of the major contributions of *Omnibus* is that it allows no breaks for commercials. The matter at hand—be it drama, ballet, or any other—is given the length of time it needs and deserves. There is no dropping one at a fixed point so that the praises of a particular product or service may be sung. When a play



Alistair Cooke of *Omnibus*



Lilli Palmer in *The Trial of Ann Boleyn* on the *Omnibus* show.

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needs twenty-five minutes for completion, that's what it is given. If *Omnibus* has done nothing else, it has certainly shown the way to greater cohesiveness and enjoyment.

A year ago a program ended its two-year run on radio for what most people thought was the usual summer hiatus. It was a surprise to all that *The Big Show* never came back. It had offered so many worthwhile pieces of entertainment in such a capable way. Most of us didn't stop to realize that it was bringing a new length of time—ninety minutes—for most listeners. However, unlike *Omnibus*, it wasn't introducing new material or techniques. The actors were highly enjoyable, but in an old format. There were still the usual bows to sponsors and the customary time-breaks. One half hour—or even an hour—of the show could have been dropped without causing any fundamental change. The one thing that was done, however, was to introduce multiple sponsorship. This practice has been taken up quite avidly by many concerns and is undoubtedly a way of keeping a name before the public over a long period at a cost that is lower than it might ordinarily have been. *Omnibus*, though it continues the idea of multiple sponsorship, does it on a different basis. Its segments are not perfectly divided into thirty-minute portions. You cannot foretell when the next break is coming or exactly what it shall bring. And because the advertisers are not the same ones who have been on TV or radio until now, you are sure of hearing a different line. Offerings are not being tailored to crowding or over-expansion so that they fit a fixed allotment of time.

A good example of this appears in the operas. Instead of the usual minimum of five parts to the program, this sort of endeavor is produced in its entirety without pauses for announcements. There are of course the intermissions that were originally planned, but there is no evidence of tampering with an already known and recognized work. In accordance with the plan to bring the best to the viewer, *Omnibus* is "using" the Metropolitan Opera Company for its presentations. I employ quotation marks on the word "using" because it is meant in a way that is not to be interpreted in the colloquial sense. The presentation is being made with the proper humility and respect. The "Met's" sets have been reproduced to the fullest extent. What you see is the same as is seen by the regular audience at the company's home grounds.

The presentation of the operas on *Omnibus* represents the first accomplish-

ment of the Metropolitan's Television Department, which was established by Rudolph Bing on April 3, 1951. At that time Mr. Bing announced: "One of the aims is to develop new techniques of stagecraft and of direction for televised opera rather than the adaptation of techniques of the Opera House stage. Television as a new mass medium has come to stay and offers unlimited possibilities for opera."

The same technique used on opera on *Omnibus* is not put into operation when doing ballet. For one thing there is no single company recognized as being the pace-setter in that field. It would avoid complications then to set up a separate organization, provided the idea of capability were kept in mind. It has been and the viewer is the richer for it. A good example was the job done on *Rodeo* by Agnes de Mille, the story of a young ranch girl. Miss de Mille directed and John Kriza, Jenny Workman and Kelly

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, did a monotype drawing on the program; and an educational and entertaining sequence on soil conservation.

Whatever the feature, *Omnibus* does it well because of its consideration for the viewer. This is shown in its use of a Master of Ceremonies. In Alistair Cooke, who performs that role, there is not so much a man who brings acts before you and then drops them for you to watch, but a traveling companion, who goes from place to place with you. He stays to see what is being offered, shares your emotions and views.

"He has a reporter's eye," said *Time* magazine in a recent commentary of Alistair Cooke, "for the lighter moods and manners of the United States, a good ear for its idioms and a graceful, often witty style that does equally well with a New York street scene, the Fourth of July in a small town, or the look of the Kansas prairies."



Setting the stage for *The Thirteenth Chair*, Benton Harbor, Mich., High School (Troupe 455), Margaret Meyn, Director.

Brown danced this "danse Americana" that is fast becoming a modern classic.

In the field of drama Helen Hayes, one of the first ladies of the American theatre, played the starring role of Kate in J. M. Barrie's drama, *The Twelve Pound Look*. The play tells the story of a woman, tired of her existence, who gains new interest in life through her discovery of the joy of accomplishment.

Other *Omnibus* features were *The Stranger Left No Card*, a dramatic character study produced by George K. Arthur, starring Alan Badel; Philippe Halsman, one of the country's leading magazine photographers, who was seen actually at work photographing Eva Gabor and Linda Christian for *LIFE*; Julio de Diego, creative contemporary artist, whose paintings are exhibited in

Born in Manchester, England, Cooke first came to the United States in 1932 for graduate study at Harvard and the Yale Drama School. Today he is the chief American correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* and has been commentator on American affairs for the BBC since 1938.

Whether or not *Omnibus* will be seen after the middle of May is a question that can be answered only by time. But whether it continues or not, the ideas it has brought to video will undoubtedly take hold. We have seen that TV can be adult and mature. We know now that it is not necessary to look over a sponsor's shoulder to see a worthwhile program. We have been given proof that it is possible to avoid the strait-jacketing of time requirements. Viva la *Omnibus*!

Thespian Chatter

By Our
Student
Thespians

Tunnelton, West Virginia (Thespian Troupe 1051)

Our school is rather small, but we staged several outstanding performances. Last year we presented *Meet Corliss Archer* with two separate casts. Many people returned the second night to compare the performances of the different casts, neither of which was considered first or second. Shortly before the opening night straws were drawn for the first presentation. Both groups performed excellently. This project caused a great deal of friendly competition between the two casts and was approved by the public. The pupils enjoyed the idea because it gave many more a chance to be in the play.—*Patty Lewis, Secretary*

Duluth, Minnesota (Thespian Troupe 1200)

Our formal initiation of our ten charter members was conducted on March 27, 1952, at a public performance in the school auditorium. This group's one-act play, *The Marriage Proposal*, by Anton Chekhov was so well received at its first public performance that we were asked to give it in Superior, Wisconsin, and at various civic functions in Duluth. We presented it also at Fort William, Ontario, Canada, on Memorial Day as part of a program to further international relations between the United States and Canada.—*Patricia McDonald, Reporter*

Woodland, California (Thespian Troupe 408)

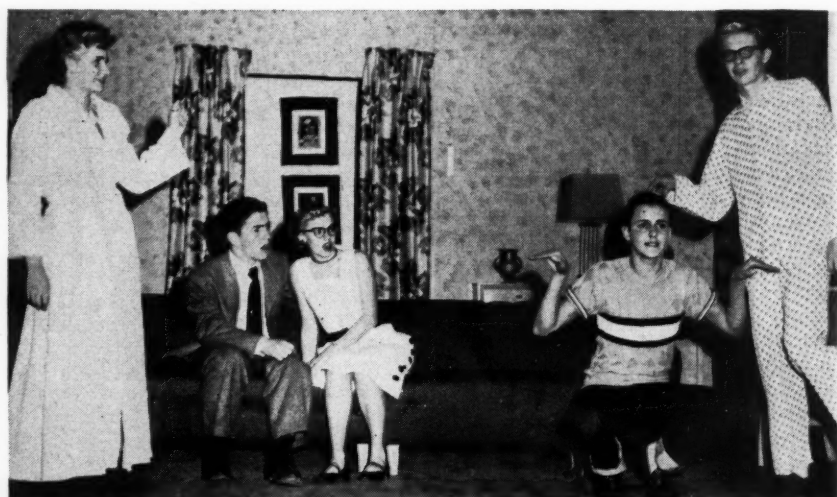
In our school all plays are sponsored by the student body. The question arose how to raise money to finance our activities. We felt that dues were not the answer, and that homemade candy and cake sales during the noon hour put a burden on some, so we sell candy bars at all basketball games. After paying for our candy bars and giving the student body 20% of the net profit, the profit to our troupe averages about \$150.00 per season. We all take turns at selling and learn to meet the public. It is an easy way for us to make money. — *Janice Lipelt, Secretary*

Princeton, West Virginia (Thespian Troupe 84)

Our first meeting of last year was held at the home of our president, Miss Peggy Thorton, at which time plans were made for the activities of the coming year. Social highlight of the year was the Christmas Banquet held at the Methodist Church. Our dramatic work began by presenting the Thanksgiving and Christmas plays, both of which were one-



Formal Initiation, Troupe 592, Pullman, Wash., High School, Mrs. Nelson Ault, Sponsor.



The Little Dog Laughed, Thespian Troupe 528, Portage High School, Crisman (Gary), Indiana, Rowena Kyle, Director.



Thespian Troupe 910, Tonasket, Wash., High School, Yvetta Snowden, Sponsor.

JUST IN TIME!

for your One-Act Play Contest or for any occasion demanding the Tops in Entertainment. These four plays are completely new and particularly suited for contest purposes.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH TV? — a comedy by Anne Coulter Martens. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c. 8 men, 5 women, extra voices. Interior setting. Gram sizes up the disturbing elements brought on by TV and attempts to find a solution. Gram's strike, complete with its picket line and placards seems to bring results. But in an hilarious finale we're left wondering if there is any solution.

STAGE STRICKEN — a comedy by Burton Crane. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c. 5 men, 3 women, 1 extra. Interior setting. We are backstage where everything that *might* go wrong with a production *does!* The Sound man is in love with the Prompter and never hits the right groove on a sound effects record. The Heroine's quick-change dress is used to mop up spilled paint. Here is sight comedy on a broad scale.

GOIN' ROUND THE HOOP — a comedy by Peter Jerome. Royalty, \$5.00. Price 50c. 2 men, 2 women. Interior setting. There's both delightful humor and pathos in this play about the problems — romantic and financial — of the Widow Gresham. Fate seems to be turning her back on the Widow, until some "holy pitchers" (actually \$50.00 bills) sent by one son and the generosity (?) of another assure her of an easier road ahead.

THE ANCHOR — a drama by Elizabeth G. Speare. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c. 4 women. Interior setting. This charming story serves to prove that wealth and social position can't replace happiness and a successful marriage. The envied sister who has had everything money can buy is about to remarry and this time sensibly. The other three sisters turn their envy to pity, though, when the intended groom has a change of mind and sails for Europe.

BAKER'S



PLAYS

569 BOYLSTON ST., BOSTON 16, MASS.

act plays. The large project of the year was presenting our annual spring play, a three-act comedy entitled *The Little Dog Laughed*. The curtain fell on another year with a formal initiation of 10 new members. This was held at the home of our sponsor, Miss Irene Norris. —Ann Campbell, Reporter

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Thespian Troupe 503)

Troupe 503, sponsored by Mrs. Jeanne B. Lutz, began last year's dramatic program with the presentation of a gay comedy, *Bobby Sox*, for the Theatre Division of the P.S.E.A. Convention in Harrisburg in September. The enthusiasm toward earning membership points was terrific with 28 new members being inducted at the initiation services. Our annual three-act play was enthusiastically received both nights of the performance of *Don't Take My Penny*. In addition to this full-length play we presented seven one-act plays of which five were student directed. Three one-act plays were presented in a *Night of Plays*. Harrisburg troupe was one of the seven chosen to present a one-act play for the Eastern Regional Convention at Reading on April 4 and 5, 1952. At that time we presented the popular drama, *High Window*, with an outstanding cast of five seniors. —Alyce Grumberg, Reporter

Bay City, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 143)

A one-act play festival held in con-

junction with five other schools last spring was the main "new" project that we attempted this year. There were speakers on staging problems, acting problems, make-up and finances. Bad weather and a power failure could not curb the enthusiasm of the people attending.

Twelve noon hour one-act plays, *The Patriots*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (these were our full-length plays for the year), and numerous engagements for arena style one-acts made a full year of dramatic activity. Twenty-eight new members were registered last year. —William M. Clay, Reporter

Wenatchee, Washington (Thespian Troupe 469)

Troupe 469 had been very active during the 1951-52 season. Early in November, we assisted the music department in producing *The Bartered Bride*. In December we produced *Life with Mother* with a double cast. In February we gave a children's theatre play, *Tom Sawyer*, with our own students in the cast and the play production class of Wenatchee Junior College. In March we gave *Murder in a Nunnery* and in April we participated in the North Central Washington Drama Festival. Both our entries rated "superior."

John Dearing, one of our outstanding dramatics students, won the "Ron Latterwhite Scholarship" in Dramatics, an award made in memory of one of our members. Next year, John will have all

expenses paid at Wenatchee Junior College where he will major in dramatics.

With the assistance of the Delta Psi Omega from Wenatchee Junior College, we put on the pageant, *Quest for a Queen*, before a huge audience in Wenatchee's "Applebowl" at the Washington State Appleblossom Festival. There they took part in the coronation of Virginia Click as queen of the festival, and of Ann Ware and Jeanette Bommer as royal princesses. All are members of Troupe 469. —Jane Hoves, Reporter

Bradley, Illinois (Thespian Troupe 223)

I feel that our troupe has had a successful and ambitious year. We produced in collaboration with the Dramatic Club the three-act play, *Brother Goose*. Many Thespians and understudies participated in the junior class production, *Fog Island*. A one-act play, *Billy Buys an Orchid*, was presented as an assembly feature and the troupe raised \$33.00 to benefit the local "March of Dimes" campaign through a benefit assembly. Twelve new members (mainly seniors) were initiated into membership. Several Thespians and pledges were represented in the District and Sectional Speech contests, our school winning first place in the District. —Theresa Africano, Secretary

Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin (Thespian Troupe 877)

On May 2, 1952, twenty-five members of the Sturgeon Bay High School Footlights Club, Troupe 877, had a most

DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET

By STANLEY J. WHITE



A publicity shot of *Heaven Can Wait*, Troupe 575, Central High School, Flint, Michigan

It may be appropriate for magicians to guard fanatically the secret of where they keep the rabbit before pulling him from the hat, but we drama teachers and directors should not shroud our productions with similar secrecy. Any observer of box-office trends, particularly in television areas, must have noticed the tapering off of attendance as well as profits. In our city when the annual high school Thanksgiving Day football classic, which has drawn 22,000 spectators, also begins to show a decline, it is possible to predict progressively smaller audiences as the number of television sets increases. I for one am not alarmed because the profits from any one play seem to shrink; rather, I am concerned that six to eight weeks of exhausting rehearsal will be expended for a partially full house. Some constructive steps can be taken to help fill the empty seats.

Curiosity will pull patrons to your show. Stimulate curiosity in your student body by taking them behind the scenes of your play. The above photograph is the type that I like to use around our school, not only to advertise the production, but to prompt some questioning which in turn becomes word-of-mouth advertising. The photograph itself is not a good example of theatrical publicity; it is obviously posed. However, the little cut-out figures which I use in blocking the action with my actors, the play book propped up to show the title, and the prompt book in the foreground showing how such a book is cut up and pasted serve as a partial drawing aside of the veil of secrecy surrounding the production of the play. Other devices that I have used include a standing invitation to any member of the student body to drop in at rehearsals, and a special invitation sent out for students to form a test audience at dress rehearsal time. Enough students always show up to form a small audience and most of them return to the regular performance with a keener insight into the problems of the production. My friend, Howard Chenerey, at Kalamazoo Central High School, takes his audiences behind the scenes during a performance by raising the curtain between acts to show his crew changing the set for a two-set show. Michigan State College, at its High School Drama Day, has make-up artists apply their paints to the actors in front of the audience before the curtain goes up. You may quickly condemn these practices as being amateurish and serving only to destroy an illusion. However, let us not forget that we are dedicated to educational theatre and educating the audience may well take place between the acts of a play instead of a vaudeville skit or violin solo, practices in which I understand some schools engage. Of course maintain your illusion while the play progresses, but you will not hurt your production at any time when the audience has suspended its identification with the play.

Survey your next production. Ask yourself: "What can I dramatize in scenery, lighting, make-up, properties, or acting in my next production that will take my audience back-stage?" A simple invitation to "look around back-stage after the show" is not enough. People are curious about how you pull your theatrical rabbits from the hat. Don't keep it a secret.

enjoyable and memorable experience. Chaperoned by three mothers and Miss Lea Wildhagen, director, they journeyed by bus (transportation financed by the club) to see the Lawrence College Theatre of Appleton, Wisconsin, present Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in arena style. We thoroughly enjoyed this rollicking comedy and some even questioned the authenticity of the lines because they were so enjoyable, and turned to the original script to make sure they were "the real thing." We were also happy to see a former member of the club doing an excellent piece of work as

one of the players.—Myron Goldman, Reporter

Elkhart, Indiana (Thespian Troupe 653)

The dramatic season of 1951-52 was officially opened when the *Junior Follies* was presented by the Juniors. The Seniors successfully produced the very popular *June Mad*. The junior dramatic classes at the same time were working hard to open the Christmas season with *The Alien Star* which was combined in an assembly with the tree-lighting ceremony. The dramatic club in joint co-operation with Troupe 653 produced

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Take Care of My Little Girl to one of the largest audiences in the last six years. Senior Thespians now turned their attention to their Easter production, *Blessed Are They*, which closed school before spring vacation. The Juniors gave the very enjoyable *The Adorable Spend-thrift*; then on May 6, Thespians held their seventh annual formal banquet and initiated nine students. [As a part of the program, advanced drama students presented *The Dear Departed*.] All the above productions were directed by the sponsor, Mrs. Christine Dillen.—George Sarantos, Secretary

Leetsdale, Pennsylvania (Thespian Troupe 421)

Troupe 421 had a very successful 1951-52 year. Our first play was *Best Foot Forward*. This was a wonderful success and a wonderful piece of work. Our sponsor, Elizabeth Koehler, produced and did a wonderful job of producing *Father of the Bride*. The production was even a bigger success than *Best Foot Forward*. —Barbara Smelas, Reporter

Kirkland, Washington (Thespian Troupe 274)

"We are all sure that we wouldn't have been able to produce this show without our Mrs. Cadle."

With this slogan in mind, the eighty-five members of Thespian Troupe 274 completed their 1951-52 program under the direction of Mrs. Marienne Cadle, faculty adviser. The most important production was the annual variety show, *Blackouts of '52*. The weekly radio half-hour, over station KRKL, featured the highlights in news and songs from the high school. Other presentations were *Skin Deep*, a one-act play; *Martha's Memories*, for Washington's birthday; a Christmas program; and an activities assembly.—Marian Hawkins, Historian



Dick Kleymeyer and Pat Dorst as Jeff Douglass and Meg Brackie in *Brigadoon*, Troupe 807, Bosse High School, Evansville, Ind., Lenore M. Cupp, Sponsor.

Muskegon, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 704)

Last year Troupe 704 under the sponsorship of Mrs. Kari Natalie Franck, Miss Jenette Faber and Miss Peggy Powers attempted a new activity. On Saturday, May 3, 1952, we invited area schools to attend a Thespian Day at our high school. Four visiting schools were represented with approximately 50 visiting students and four faculty members. Our troupe members acted as hosts and hostesses for the event, as well as crews and planning committees. The events of the day proceeded as follows:

- 9:30 A.M.—Registration.
- 10:00 A.M.—Theatre-in-the-round (three one-act plays were presented for the student audience. Two of the plays were student-directed).
- 11:30 A.M.—Adjudicator's criticism.
- 12:00 Noon—Luncheon.
- 1:00 P.M.—Bus tour of the three local radio stations.
- 4:00 P.M.—Broadcast from WKBZ-FM (15 minutes of music, 15 minute dramatic show, 30 minute platter show with interviews of visiting faculty and record dedication by visiting students).
- 5:00 P.M.—Guests' departure.
- 7:00 P.M.—Thespian Banquet for Troupe 704.

This Thespian Day was such a successful activity, we are considering repeating the program again next year, but probably at an earlier date.—Peggy Powers, Reporter

Portland, Oregon (Thespian Troupe 913)

Our troupe found that entertaining veterans at hospitals, old folks at the County Farm, and patients at County Hospitals were the most gratifying and worthwhile activities of the 1951-52 school year. We visited these places in cooperation with the Red Cross. Our school activities included two three-act plays, *Footloose* and *You Can't Take It with You*; a choric drama with music; a short version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* for a play festival; and a student written and directed musical fantasy, which we think is the only one of its kind



Lowell Zelinsky and Betty Grass as Mr. Thorke and Aunt Trina in *I Remember Mama*, Troupe 971, Owatonna, Minn., High School, Helen Steppe, Sponsor.

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by a student. The music is superb and Gershwinish.—Mary Lu Dolcich, Secretary

East St. Louis, Illinois (Thespian Troupe 118)

On October 15, 1951, the St. Teresa Academy Thespian Troupe 118 celebrated the feast day of the patroness, St. Teresa of Avila, of our school in a special way. We presented a one-act play, entitled *Angels Unawares*, depicting an incident in her life. Next in line was our annual Christmas play, entitled *His Star*, which was well received at each of its three performances. Then the "piece de resistance" of our dramatic year was *The Song at the Scaffold*, which illustrated the French revolution and its effect on a young Carmelite novice. True to life, the play tells of sixteen Carmelite nuns sent to the guillotine during the riotous French Revolution. With the contrast between the quiet cloistered convent life and the loud, insane demands of the barbarous crowd outside, the tension between a vigorous novice mistress and a humble, fearful novice produces the moral climax of the play. Although *The Song at the Scaffold* was a much more intense dramatic effort than our usual annual operetta, the impact of the play on the student body and the audience proved that the message was not brought in vain.—Joann O'Sullivan, Secretary

Ypsilanti, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 789)

A very enjoyable and prosperous year was the good fortune of the Ypsilanti Thespian Troupe 789 for the school year 1951-52. In the fall our all-school play, *The Divine Flora*, was a smashing success and the one-act play, *When the Stars Fall*, was a drawing card for the Band Carnival. Throughout the year we put on radio programs and members of the troupe excelled in dramatic and humorous reading contests. A picnic, various potluck dinners and initiations were held with a formal initiation in April. The Troupe started with ten members including our adviser and ended the year with sixty. We finished the year with a series of one-act plays and the spectacular senior play entitled *Green Valley*. —Nancy K. Hawes, Secretary

Danville, Illinois (Thespian Troupe 59) OPERATION — ADVERTISING

The two girls walking by a show window of a downtown Danville store paused, and one stared somewhat in awe. "Why, they've even put advertising for the Senior Class Play in a store window!" exclaimed the girl. "Oh, sure. We thought it would be a good idea to get it out wherever we could," answered the other. Sure enough, there in a fashionable dress shop, pinned to the various models, were such signs as these: "Miss Brooks likes this casual dress," or "Miss Finch prefers this sweater and skirt."

Yes, we had advertising galore for our Senior Class Play, *Our Miss Brooks*. The store window was only one of many ideas. In the main hall of the first floor of our school was a large framed portrait in color of our leading lady, Nora Kenny, as Miss Brooks. Under the picture was a poster depicting the black-board in Miss Brooks' room at school. On it was written the title of the play, the time, place, and cost of tickets, along with the ever-present "2+2," "5-4," " $? \times x = y$," etc. On both of these was thrown a spotlight which cast its light throughout the day for two weeks before the play.

Across the hall from the picture was a huge white placard on which was a picture of each member of the cast. Underneath each picture was the "play" name of the person, written in that person's own hand. The person's real name was printed in.

Everywhere we could see the results of hard, though happy, hours of work. Posters here, placards there, banners everywhere else! Of course each member of the cast did his part in furthering the ticket sale; we had cast members who sold as many as 125 tickets, sometimes 45 or more in one day.

In the cafeteria we could also see the product of laborious hours of tedious work. In all the desserts the week of the play was stuck a toothpick on the end of which was a miniature reproduction of a slate. With white tempera paint many people spent long hours printing "Our Miss Brooks — May 9 — 60¢." It became a fad for both faculty and students to wear these clever little signs.

Through the combined efforts of our gracious director (and general manager of everything), Mary Miller, and the entire Senior Class of 1952, *Our Miss Brooks* went off as planned — with huge success. We take hats off to — Operation-Advertising. — Nedra Moore, Reporter



Making-Up — Sponsor Mary Ella Bovee prepares Allan Gorelick for the part of Mr. Peter-sham in *The Best There Is*, Troupe 604, Eastchester High School, Tuckahoe, N. Y.

The "MAXWELL FAMILY" plays by Donald Payton

Thousands of play directors have found in Donald Payton's "MAXWELL FAMILY" plays exactly what they have been seeking — plays that are ideally suited to teen-agers — plays that are clean, wholesome, with hilariously funny lines and situations. We are listing below all of Payton's plays published to date. Please use catalog index (pages 142-144) for story synopsis.

3 ACT PLAYS

Rest Assured, 6m, 7w
(extras, if desired)
Finders Creepers, 7m, 7w
Boarding House Reach, 7m, 9w
Honey In the Hive, 6m, 8w
Royalty, \$10.00 — Books, 75 cents

If Mother Only Knew, 5m, 6w
Happy Daze, 6m, 6w
Just Ducky, 6m, 6w
Desperate Ambrose, 6m, 6w
Mother Does the Talking, 6m, 7w

1 ACT PLAYS

Wilbur's Honey Bea, 3m, 4w
Life o' the Party, 6m, 6w
Sure As You're Born, 3m, 3w
Wilbur Minds the Baby, 3m, 5w
Wilbur's Wild Night, 4m, 4w
Wilbur Saw It First, 4m, 3w
Foxy Grandma, 4m, 3w
Shock Of His Life, 3m, 3w
Uncle Tom's Crabbin', 5m, 6w

Wilbur Faces Life, 3m, 5w
Bobby Sox, 4m, 3w
Wilbur's New Uncle, 3m, 4w
Listen, Dad, 3m, 4w
Love Hits Wilbur, 2m, 4w
Cute and Peppy, 8w
Date for Bobby Sox, 2m, 3w
Stoney Jones, 2m, 4w (extras)

Books, 50 cents each

WEST VIRGINIA: All our hats are off to this writer (Donald Payton) who really knows how to write an enjoyable teen-age play. We have presented all of his plays for they are so successful and enjoyable. Please let me know when his next play is published. — Mrs. Johnson, Director of Dramatics, Bluefield, West Virginia.

WISCONSIN: We feel that "Rest Assured" has been one of our top productions and we've had some mighty good ones in the past too. The cast loved it and the audiences were more than enthusiastic over it. — Rev. Guy E. Guyon, Central Catholic High School, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

TEXAS: Miss Mary Frances Ball, Director of Dramatics, McLean Jr. High School, Ft. Worth, Texas, recently wrote us as follows: "Donald Payton writes, in my opinion, almost the only plays which are perfectly adapted to junior high school. Our audience loved 'Wilbur Saw It First' and so did I!"

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(Thespian Troupe 568)

At the Regional One-Act Play Festival on Nov. 23, 1951, our offering, *Pawnshop Granny*, won superior rating for our leading lady. Contrasting offerings by the upper classmen included *The Mystery of the Masked Girl* and *Jessica's Journey*. The traditional Christmas play was titled *The Canticle of the Nativity*. Twenty-three candidates were received into the troupe in February. Shortly afterward *Too Many Stars* was presented by a sophomore group. The season of Lent brought a capacity house to the Seniors' *No Plaster Saint*, which together with the earlier production of *Mansions*, commemorated International Theatre Month. Early in April, freshmen and sophomores presented an evening of one-act plays. On April 25, the comedy, *Ladies Lounge*, was staged. Thirty seniors participated in the double cast production, *Career Angel*, which completed the dramatic activities on May 18. Sister Charitas is our troupe sponsor. — Mary Catherine McHugh, Secretary

St. Louis, Missouri

(Thespian Troupe 1069)

Troupe 1069 became a very important part of extracurricular activities during 1951-52. Our Thespians presented an

evening of three one-act plays plus sponsoring the all-school play, *Our Town*. Every Thespian helped with the senior play, *Life with Father*, either by acting, directing, working back stage, or as house managers. Early last fall a Candle-light Initiation Ceremony was given at the home of our President. On May 7, our troupe presented a banquet for the graduating Thespians at which six under-students were initiated. — Alice Kaegel, Secretary

Tallmadge, Ohio

(Thespian Troupe 832)

One of the main activities that Troupe 832 and Dramatics group sponsor during the year is the production of one-act plays, which are all directed by students. *Are We Dressing*, given last January, was one of the most successful and well-liked one-act plays given before the P.T.A. and student body. It was directed by senior student Jean Digby. *Don't Call Me Junior* under the student direction of Loy Booker, a senior, was another well-liked play given in March before the students and Tallmadge Stadium Association.

Tallmadge's senior play, given November, 1951, was *Mother Is a Freshman*; and the junior play, given last April, was the riotous *The Campbells Are Coming*. — Carolyn Fraley, Secretary

STAGING

(Continued from page 15)

make-up such as that used for any production. The ghosts used paler bases but did not appear white or ghastly. We used a small toothbrush mustache for Archie and a Vandyke beard and mustache of crepe hair for the General. Mat's hair was combed into a Jimmy Savo type bang. Lady Hortense's hair was swept up into a cap which matched her costume, but Penelope's hair although swept back from her face, fell to her shoulders.

Costumes

We made the costumes for Lady Penelope and Lady Hortense after going through our costume room and finding a pale blue satin shepherdess costume and a black moire taffeta Mary Queen of Scots costume. We converted them by adding new material and re-styling and re-fitting. Filmy floor length capes attached to the shoulders gave a ghost-like effect. We decided against white costumes because we preferred to use color symbolism. We also found in the costume room a blue flannel servant's costume for Mat. Identical Cavalier costumes were rented for Archie and the General. The rest of the costumes were borrowed from families. Miss Potter was very tweedy, Mrs. Malone eccentric, and Judith very chic in simply styled gowns. The cast dressed for dinner and wore street dress for the balance of the play.

Budget

Because we participate in the activity ticket and our little theatre only seats 244, we needed to have three matinees and two evening performances to accommodate our audiences. This increased the cost of royalty and tickets. Royalty is normally \$25 per performance.

Royalty (5 performances, including 3 matinees)	\$ 95.00
Tickets	10.50
Programs	23.50
Costumes	37.50
Lumber	5.00
Paint	15.00
Properties (including suit of armor rental)	5.00
Posters	10.00
Postage	6.00
Record	1.30
Make-up	1.60
Total	\$210.40

Play books were not counted into the budget because most of our students who pay the deposit on the play books never return them, preferring to keep the books for souvenirs.

Publicity

In publicizing a play it has been found helpful to have a trademark or motif which would always be associated with the play title. One of our girls created a shy ghost with Cavalier hat and sword which was used in all our publicity. It was also used on the printed



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program and on the printed posters. The construction paper posters for the rooms were shaped like shy ghosts and the large hand-drawn hall posters also carried this motif. Some members of the cast wore tiny lapel ghosts and these were also used on the bulletin boards which featured pictures of the cast. Regular publicity, such as newspaper stories and announcements in the daily bulletin, were also used. Every day we had a different Bleating Hawk, who was chosen because of his prominence in school affairs. This person was known only to the director who gave him one free ticket for the show. The first person who asked the Bleating Hawk of the day, "Are you Bleating Hawk?" received the free ticket. This created a good deal of interest in the play.

Now that federal taxes are not required on school tickets and tickets need no longer be accounted for, we have inaugurated a letter to parents and friends which explains the production and arouses curiosity in the reader. Inclosed in the letter were two tickets to the production which, if used, were paid for at the door. The psychological effect of having tickets in the hands of the possible spectator was extremely effective. Many people used tickets who ordinarily would have ignored our postcard notification.

Results

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

(Continued from page 12)

all things, we cannot establish a dividing line or divorce one associated element from another.

In establishing a particular rhythm or timing we must have relaxation. This is necessary in coordination if that coordinate action is to be a smooth one. Even in the sense of a broken rhythm in many required cases, the timing and relaxation on the part of the performer is paramount in gaining smoothness—a flow of movement, a follow-through of action. Now, there is a statement we have heard time and time again—a follow-through of action. The director has stated it many times over to the actor; the coach has beleaguered the athlete with it. The musician in playing a pizzicato passage must relate the one note to the next if the entire composition is to maintain a unity, although the ear may not detect any apparent liaison. Even the staccato rattat-tat of a machine-gun has a unity of sounds. This liaison, this connection of movement, can be called "follow-through."

This unity of action, whether it be a broken rhythm or a gliding rhythm, is dependent upon timing. Proper timing depends upon relaxation. The performer of a movement will find it difficult to achieve rhythm and timing without relaxation. Relaxation comes through a concerted effort of practice and concentration. The actor who is unsure of his movement and is clumsy in executing a certain piece of business will find it difficult to relax. Result: the unity of his entire performance is marred. Likewise the sport contestant who is uncertain of his movement, unrehearsed in his timing and rhythm, spoils a possible hope of gaining his goal. It goes without dwelling too long on the point that assurance of action and movement brings unity—and coordination.

Above we mentioned concentration. This is that necessary element without which we are often at a loss. Note the player in a game whenever something goes amiss. If concentration is present, an emergency action immediately takes place. Perhaps there is a change of rhythm or pacing. But the movement is and should be made with deftness and flow. This emergency arises far oftener than we care to admit. The lack of concentration of one member of a team may necessitate a quick change from another member. On stage a line may be dropped—even a page—and an emergency change of pace and rhythm becomes necessary to accomplish a most vital action to the scene or play. Can we then refute the co-relationship of physical education and drama?

It has been mentioned by an athletic director that concentration on physical fitness as well as coordination is one of the basic ingredients of teamwork. Where the grandstand player is wrapped

up in his own importance, his concentration becomes self-centered. Although he may be fundamentally and potentially an outstanding athlete, he neglects the fact that he is only part of the entire picture. Yes, we can even use this approach to such individual sports as tennis, track and swimming. It is a fallacy to assume that teamwork becomes more important in a game of doubles or in a relay event. Teamwork of the entire body is important when the game or event is solo work.

The members of a play cast must also assume this teamwork. The "star" who is involved with the exaggeration of his own importance is as self-centered as the grandstand player. It can be taken that each character in a play is an individual performance, but in the final analysis it must be remembered that each individual characterization is dependent upon another. The action and reaction of one performer is thoroughly interlaced with the reaction and action of all the other several parts. As in real life, we are individuals with our own aims, our own actions, our own wants and desires, yet dependent and interdependent upon other individuals or groups of individuals. On the playing field the goal is the final score; in a play it is the central idea: "The play's the thing."

What then does physical fitness, coordination and teamwork ultimately give us? This brings us to our fourth point: the development of a sense of responsibility. In view of what has been said, can we imagine any logical situation, when training has been accomplished with a sense of assurance and purpose, in which that sense of responsibility has not also developed hand-in-hand with the others? Let us look at a specific situation to point out the reason for this contention.

Many schools, this writer feels, contend that we must teach students a sense of responsibility and then enmesh them in supervision and more supervision in the final test. Over-supervision tends rather to destroy a sense of responsibility than develop it. Thus we find in many schools this morass of supervision with two or three teachers backstage during a performance, another teacher overseeing the wardrobe room, another teacher overseeing the dressing-rooms, and still another overseeing the ushers. On the playing field we find coaches continually shouting directions to the players in the heat of action. What is the reason for this supervision, this over-supervision? Does it prove the student incompetent of accepting responsibility? Or does it prove the teacher, coach, or director uncertain of his training?

Over a period of five years in one school it has been proven that students, carefully trained and rehearsed in their parts and duties in a play, can and do assume complete responsibility for the entire performance and their conduct without a single supervisor back stage, and that includes the director. This

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is even extended to the intermission periods. It is easy to see that this cannot perforce be carried out to that extent on the athletic field. Nevertheless many coaches have remained silent on the sideline and given instructions at the bench—not from the bench—or in the locker room. The instructions in such situations have been more in the order of "do" rather than "don't," altering a tactic as is needed to meet a specific situation. Unlike a play, a game has far more unexpected turns of events which require some supervision. In each instance, however, where the player has been carefully instructed and trained, where the player has integrated physical aptness, coordination and teamwork, the coach's supervision becomes less. Again, the development of a sense of responsibility is applicable to the work in either physical education or drama.

It is all well and good to discuss glibly the alliance of drama with physical education; but it is another thing when we speak of integrating the two programs. This writer must admit that he is lacking in experience in methods of attaining this association. In curriculum planning this aspect could be introduced and a discussion held as to the ultimate benefits to both fields. Again, it has been found that the athlete who meets the aforementioned points in his work will be the better participant in a dramatic presentation. Reversely this applies to the drama student. Thus the physical educational program is a definite benefit to the drama student, and the drama program is an additional aid to the athlete.

Where there is no recognition of the integration of the two programs, it may be well for the drama student and instructor to observe, study and utilize the requirements in the field of physical education and apply them to the field of drama. May we return for a moment to the dance. Since the dance is the basis of all drama, and since dancing requires the aptness, coordination and teamwork described, isn't it logical for the student or the drama instructor to suggest the inclusion of it in the physical education program for all students? Let it be as simple as folk dancing or ballroom dancing. Many schools have incorporated it for both girls and boys; more are following suit; still more have increased their dance training program. It is a start. And what better start is there than with the dance?

As students of the theatre know, drama has always been allied to physical education. A renaissance in the realization and development of this alliance is long overdue.

ON THE AIR

(Continued from page 10)

in such fields as English, languages, psychology, sociology, history, current affairs, and don't forget music appreciation. Theatre courses aren't going to help you very much, although they'll be fun. You'll get radio-speech and radio-dramatics in the broadcasting department.

While you have the opportunity, study all the phases of radio. Don't limit your scope to acting and announcing. Think of directing and producing, of continuity-writing. There are many other jobs vital to the running of a studio which may attract you once you learn of them. Executive and commercial jobs are available such as management, sales, program building, traffic management.

When you have learned all that the college has to teach you and have received your degree, start looking for a job. The professional contacts you will have made in the broadcasting department will be a great help, and your college radio instructors can give you better advice than I, but you'll still have a serious problem.

The small stations will be your best opportunity. Get yourself a copy of *Broadcasting Yearbook*², a trade magazine which will give you the names and addresses of every station in the country. (You can also subscribe to their weekly magazine, *Broadcasting*³, which will keep you up to date in the field.)

Almost as much as in the theatre, most radio shows originate in New York City, with some competition from Los Angeles where the film stars broadcast from Hollywood.

If your heart is still set on acting, you must remember that there is very little paid acting on small stations. Make yourself an audition disc—that is, have a recording made of several short scenes illustrating a variety of the type of acting that you do best. Take the disc not only to radio stations but to the radio departments of advertising agencies. Many radio programs are made up not by the station but by an advertising agency. *Broadcasting Yearbook* will also give you these names and addresses.

You're on your own: good luck to you!

Now what about television? TV is barely out of the try-anything stage, but it is certainly opening up a tremendous number of new acting jobs. On April 14, 1952, the Federal Communications Commission lifted its three-and-a-half year freeze on building new stations. At that time there were in the United States 108 stations in 63 areas. Now new stations are springing up like mushrooms. The FCC has allocated channels for 2053.

This burst of growth would seem to provide a wonderful opening for any actor. But before you rush off to New



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York, stop and think of the thousands of out-of-work stage and screen actors with recognized talent and experience who are waiting in line for every TV acting job. You'd better make sure of your training and your ability before you compete with them.

There is much discussion as to whether the door to TV is through radio, stage, or screen. As a theatre person I am undoubtedly prejudiced, but it seems to me that the nearest field is the stage. Unlike radio, the TV actor cannot depend on a script; he has to memorize his lines. He needs stage training to make him realize how to use his body as an effective tool. On the stage he learns to sustain the character, to *be* the character. He cannot keep an eye cocked for signals nor give away the fact that he is watching for directions. Unlike movie work, the TV actor must learn what the stage actor knows—how to carry on and cover mistakes whether his or another player's. No director will shout "Out!" and make a retake. A live show has to keep going, if the sky—or the scenery—falls.

However, the stage actor has much to learn about TV itself. He has to learn how to let the camera help him—to know when it is on a long shot and only broad gestures will carry and when it is in a close-up and the lift of an eyebrow will have tremendous significance. He must know—until color television comes along—in what degree of white, black, and grey the colors of his cos-

tumes will telecast. Did you know, for instance, that all TV white shirts are blue because the light reflected from a pure white shirt makes the actor's face appear dirty?

Few if any colleges have actual TV stations, but most large broadcasting departments are getting more and more "mock-up" equipment—that is, reproductions of actual equipment. Choose your college and your courses as I suggested for a radio career except for this important change: Take all the stage acting courses you can get. Most authorities agree that the would-be television actor can get more practical help from acting courses in college than from a special television school. Such TV schools are more help to the production men than they are to the actor.

When you graduate, you start "making the rounds," and I'm afraid chances aren't much more optimistic than in any other acting career. Success still depends on being at the right place at the right time.

Apparently there is one sure method for getting an acting opportunity on television. Become a star of stage, screen, or radio, and television will be clamoring for your services. There must be an easier way. If you find one, let me know.⁴

Recommended reading:
 Ranson, Jo, and Pack, Richard: **OPPORTUNITIES IN TELEVISION**, Vocational Guidance Manuals, Grosset and Dunlop, New York City.
 Southwell, John: **GETTING A JOB IN TELEVISION**, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., New York City.
 Chester, Giraud, and Garrison, Garnet R.: **RADIO AND TELEVISION, AN INTRODUCTION**, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York City.

² **BROADCASTING YEARBOOK:** Broadcasting Publications, Inc., 870 National Press Building, Washington, D. C. \$5.00 per copy. Also publish **TELECASTING YEARBOOK**.

³ **BROADCASTING-TELECASTING**, The Newsweekly of Radio and Television. 35c per copy. \$6.50 per year.

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TELEVISION

(Continued from page 9)

There are several ways to have your script considered; as a matter of fact, there are as many as you can imaginatively devise. The best is to break into television via the back door: selling your material first to someone else, preferably a magazine like *COLLIER'S* or *AMERICAN*, or in play form to one of the large play publishers like Samuel French. Once you are published, there will be no foolishness about getting an agent.

But if you are not equipped to make this approach, or if you are determined to make your mark in the television field alone, there is still hope. A personal letter from someone of importance in your local radio or television station to the script department of the network in New York, with a recommendation of your play, should obtain a reading of your work in New York. There are also agents who will read your script. Here a word of warning: agents who advertise in writing journals that they will read your manuscript *for a fee* usually make their living *not* by selling manuscripts to editors or producers but by collecting fees from hopeful, unsuspecting authors. Beware! An intelligent letter to one of the reputable agents listed — *but not advertised* — in the writer's journals may bring an invitation to sub-

mit a sample of your work; it's worth a try. Likewise, a letter to the script departments of the major networks in New York can bring nothing worse than a polite no. The rule mentioned above, that a script must be submitted by an agent — a rule brought into effect, incidentally, when the network discovered that only one out of every two thousand unsolicited manuscripts was worthy of purchase — can be broken; it is broken every week or so. If you can digest your story *satisfactorily* in a few lines — and you are a fortunate author if you can! — it may peak the proper interest.

The writer's journals, notably *THE WRITER'S YEARBOOK* published in Cincinnati, lists agencies and editors and producers. So far postage has been less affected by inflation than any other necessity — why not gamble a few stamps? (Enclose self-addressed stamped envelope if you want your script back.)

Thus far no mention has been made of the series shows — the "private eyes" and their troubles with mayhem, or the first-rate family chronicles like *Mama* — simply because most of these are written by salaried writers and are therefore most difficult, if not impossible, for the beginner to break into.

If after this enormous amount of work and trouble, the author should sell his play, what sort of remuneration might he expect? The prevailing rates

today for a half-hour original play range from \$500 to \$750. This represents a considerable improvement over, say, two years ago — at which time the present writer was doing adaptations of short stories for half-hour programs for the same fee that he was recently paid for a very brief (seven-minute) dramatic sketch for the Ken Murray show. The future promises more financial rewards for the television author than for any but the first-rate Broadway playwrights. As early as this coming fall (television looks ahead) the regular pay for a writer on a top-flight TV series should average more than that paid on the average Hollywood writing-contract.

If the writer of this article may be permitted a personal note: despite a great deal of experience, I would not gamble (or speculate) on writing an original half-hour play for a specific program without an outline-approval, an assignment, or a down payment. *But*, on the other hand, if I were now a beginning, unpublished author — aware as I am now that one must gamble weeks, months, even years in order to get started — I would concentrate on a study of television techniques. I would read the manuals, follow the trends, watch the shows, analyze them; I would work and I would take my chances. The future of television is incalculable; but the horizon can only grow wider, the market greater, the prices higher.

HIGH SCHOOL

(Continued from page 7)

or *Seventeenth Summer*. If you haven't done so, you'll be surprised at what results.

Oh, I know why some of you don't do that. The only acceptable reason you can offer to the authorities in your school for having a play at all is to raise money for sweaters for the football team or the band. And so you have to tune yourself to the Mickey Mouse mentality of the audience that will be there.

In chagrin I have to acknowledge the existence of the situation, and so I say our first need is a campaign of education for educators, and I offer it as a project for the National Thespian Society. *By hook or by crook, we have got to convince high school principals and school superintendents and members of school committees to far greater numbers than at present that theatre for high school pupils is a worthwhile, dignified activity of sufficient value in itself to stand on its own feet and to proceed to its own goals, and that diverting it, or using it to some subsidiary end, is not assisting but crippling its purpose and its worthwhileness.*

And not only must we accomplish that, but we must make them see that for its best development it must have equipment as specialized as does any other laboratory. Then — and I say this as one who has handled school finances for many years — we must be able to show them how that can be done without bankrupting them. We can defeat ourselves by indiscretion in that direction, so we ourselves must know the differences between adequacy and extravagance.

I know how bad facilities are in many schools, but poor facilities are not necessarily a reason for doing nothing. Why not make a start with what we have, and let the handicap of inadequacy be the argument for what we might do with something better? *The point is to produce a product worth something better.* That is the quick way to gaining an end in the school business. The other, and the slower, is to be belligerently aggressive to the point of offending someone, and take a beating for years without end.

Now the question is, what are we going to do about our situation? What can an organization, such as the New England Theatre Conference or The National Thespian Society, do to help us, and how willing is it to do anything at all? What is the cure for the troubles we have? I don't know the specific answer to any of those questions, but I know what I would like to see done as a feeble beginning. And by way of illustration, let me turn to school athletics.

"Why," we ask, "can we not have the same public support for school theatre that we have for school athletics?" Well, I doubt if we shall ever get that, but I do think we can come much nearer to it than we are at the present. The two activities are so basically different in

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their natures as hardly to lead us to expect the same responses. The one is competitive; the other is cultural. The theatre does not lend itself to mass hysteria and violent partisanship; athletics do. They are born out of competition and partisanship, and they thrive on hysteria.

But let me point out to you that part of this avid interest in schoolboy athletics is an artificial development instigated by the daily newspapers. The athletic contests of the local schools weren't always haunted by the local press. There was a time — and this is a matter of personal experience — when, if a game was to be reported at all, some member of the school — often as not the coach — wrote the account and sent it to the paper free. Then some enterprising sports editor apparently saw a light. If the games were in the paper, the boys bought the paper and circulation went up, and his worth to the paper went up with it. And from that beginning the schoolboy athletic news became what it is today. A closely parallel growth is quietly in process at the moment. Did you not notice that the "Little League" activities of 10-year-old youngsters have been getting anywhere up to a column a day on the sporting pages of some of the Boston papers this summer?

Why then cannot something of the

same nature be done for the school theatre? The power of the press is what we are talking about. I don't mean a press that will present the unfortunate distortion that a national magazine presented of a school theatre a couple of years or so ago. If that had happened to me, I would have been much distressed. That was what I call obstructive press. Nor do I mean a press that gives lip service by protesting its interest and then doing nothing about it. I mean a modest dignified press that will give assistance in keeping with what we are trying to do.

Specifically, I would like to find someone willing to go just far enough to spare three or four or five inches of the page on which reviews appear, to print once a week a little box headed "High School Theatre," or some equally descriptive title. In it, I would like to see listed the school plays for that week, with a list, perhaps, of the pupils in the casts. Would it be worth their while? I don't know, but I am almost certain that as many people would read it as read most of the rest of the theatrical page except the movie ads.

Would it grow beyond that? I don't know that, either. But it might be that after the editors had kept their ears to the ground for a year or two and had found out where the best work was being done, they might even find someone on their staff who would be willing to go out to that community and see a school play and — who knows? — even mention it in the column.

And finally, I would like to say this to those editors; there are school plays that are worth it. Heaven knows I wouldn't ask you to rush about the country taking in every school production that comes along. You would die of ennui before the end of a week. But I have seen a production of *Peter Pan* done by high school pupils so far superior to any performances ever produced by professional and semi-professional companies in Boston as to put them to shame, and you write them up. And I have seen *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* and *The Marriage Proposal* and *I Remember Mama* done by high school casts with an excellence of acting and an atmosphere of sincerity much more satisfying than many of the bored perfunctory performances I have witnessed from professional companies in the summer theatres adjacent to my town and you write them up.

Won't you please then as an experiment, try taking your eyes off that big name in lights on the marquee for just a moment, and see who is standing by your side?

Just one other word, and this to you school directors. We are asking for recognition. We cannot expect such recognition on our own say-so. It will come only upon proof that what we offer is worth recognizing. What success we have then depends upon ourselves. Nothing but the best will gain for us what we want. Let us see that we give nothing but the best.

BRIEF VIEWS

By TALBOT PEARSON

GREENBERG: PUBLISHER

New York City

Great Stars of the American Stage, a pictorial record by Daniel Blum. Perhaps by way of redressing the balance the Editor of *DRAMATICS* forwarded Mr. Blum's picture-album at a most opportune moment. After the reading since last June of over 130 newly published plays and textbooks (and some of them were anthologies), a sort of critical indigestion threatened this department. *Great Stars* proved a timely remedy and the Brief Viewer is now happily convalescent. The cure is recommended to other playreaders, to directors needing a charge in their batteries before making plans for next fall, to the stage-struck student and to any lover of the Theatre. Have we left out anyone? . . .

Mr. Blum's record goes back to the days of Bernhardt and Mrs. Fiske, to Mansfield and Mantell, but it also includes the names of some young players now prominent on the New York stage and on television. Younger readers may indulge in smiles at some of the hairdos and costumes of the great ones who electrified audiences in 1900 and thereabouts; they should remember the advances made in the arts and crafts of photography, make-up and lighting. There can be no denial of the overpowering personalities and animal magnetisms that vitalize even the most faded and ill-lighted photographs of fifty years ago. Moreover there was, in those days, no deadly standardization in personal appearance. Eyebrows were worn as either Nature or the owner directed; distinctiveness and not conformity was the rule. And what if some of the ladies' coiffures do look, to modern eyes, something like rats' nests? Short hair and frequent shampoos do not automatically guarantee acting talent. But lest the Viewer's readers should think that this volume is merely an old family album let them be assured that Mary Martin is here, both in short hair and long. So, also, is Tallulah (in all kinds of hair) and Helen Hayes, whose active professional career goes back, believe it or not, to 1909.

And the men are given full recognition, from heart-flutterers and matinee idols like James J. Hackett and Henry Miller to Lawrence Olivier, Alfred Drake and Marlon Brando, with immortal comics like Weber and Fields, Ed Wynn and W. C. Fields enjoying their rightful place in this actors' Elysium.

Perhaps the most instructive feature to younger theatromanes will be the opportunity to read about such mainstays of many a Hollywood structure as Marjorie Rambeau, Peggy Wood, Ethel Barrymore and to discover that they were once (cheu, fugaces!) ingenues, then leading ladies, always great ladies of the theatre. They were not discovered in a drugstore or found by talent scouts in a bathing-beauty contest. Yet beauty was always theirs, with the useful addition of talent.

While we have no quarrel with Mr. Blum's desire to include some of the quite recently notable young players, men and women, there can be much disagreement with his particular selections. And his omissions, even when every allowance is made for the size of his task, are even more glaring. In a collection which includes some players with only one Broadway success to their credit (and not even as a star) it is hard to see why the compiler omitted such really notable people as Margaret Sullivan, Miriam Hopkins, Estelle Winwood, Vivienne Segal — or Louis Calhern, Glenn Anders and Montgomery Clift. Perhaps in a later edition

some of these names could be allowed to displace a few of the present less worthy tenants of valuable space. And an early revision of this edition would be in order on another score: There are some really distressing misspellings scattered through the pages.

While the price of the book is rather higher than a drugstore paper-back it should be regarded as a sound investment for the long-term. Moreover it may be obtained quite painlessly through a subscription to *The Fireside Theatre*, details of whose offer appeared on page 2 of the January 1953 issue of *DRAMATICS*. Mention should be made of the source of this information; it will be helpful in ensuring repeat offers of this kind.

GROSSET AND DUNLAP, INC.

New York City

A Pictorial History of the American Theatre by Daniel Blum. This volume, originally published in 1950, is now available in a Third (Revised) Edition. The compiler is one of the most helplessly stage-struck people alive and this collection of photographs from his scrap-book contains over 3500 items. Mr. Blum dates his history only from 1900, not because that was the beginning of it all but since his own records were presumably not so complete prior to then. It makes a good starting point and there will be few theatregoers able to dispute his selections in the early years. Later on, with memories fresher, there may be some violence

in the arguments about his choice of the notable evenings in those narrow streets around Times Square. But the fact remains that here is one man's honest record, well-documented with photographs of scenes, sets and individuals, calculated to revive many a pleasant memory and conjure up past delights.

For those readers of *DRAMATICS* with their theatre lives yet to live, the *Pictorial History* should be more than a textbook to be studied. It is a success story to inspire.

This department found pleasure in taking the name of some player now at the top of the tree and discovering him in his first Broadway success, then following his steady climb through a variety of parts to eventual stardom. And beyond mere "stardom" too, since that word is hopelessly overworn these days. . . . Let's be careful now, since we want to stay friends, but can't we all think of a dozen really great personalities of the stage to whom the rank of mere "star" would be demeaning? Considering, that is, the smooth-faced incompetents to whom that rank is freely accorded by their windy press-agents? . . . We don't want to be invidious, but — oh, what's the use — why stall about it? . . . Great ladies and gentlemen of the Theatre, like the Lunts, the Oliviers, the Misses Hayes, Anderson and Cornell, the Barrymores, are beyond the cheapened title of "star." Does any reader want to make something of this? So too are many others happily still with us but retired from active work, yet well remembered by even the not-so-oldsters. For example, Maude Adams (never anyone like her, before or since) transcended mere stardom. She was, she still is, a legend. In this same class of living legends might be placed Fritzi Scheff and Billie Burke. They're all here, in the book, and even after due allowance has been made for the inadequacy of the cameras of 1920 it is easy to see, after looking at the pictures of their heyday, why lines formed at the box offices and millionaires stormed the stage doors.

WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
Boston, Mass.

The Anchor, a play in one act, by Elizabeth George Speare; 4 f.; interior of a Vermont farmhouse. This is another of the well-written and playable short items from *The House of Baker*. Four sisters, separated for years, meet in the old family home at the invitation of the eldest, now the owner of the property. Each of the three imagines herself the only one invited. Faith, the eldest, has been the object of their envy; she has had a wealthy marriage, world travel and social position. But she turns out to be an object rather of pity than otherwise. Good, taut writing and characterization.

RANDOM HOUSE
New York City

Mr. Pickwick, a comedy freely drawn from Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, by Stanley Young; 2 acts, 6 scenes; 17 m., 8 f.; various scenes in Chatham and London. There appear to be five different locales for the action of this quite excellent dramatization of the principal episode in the "Papers," but the customary inventiveness of high school producers and their staffs should make a presentation possible without too much difficulty or expense. The rights of the play are controlled, not by the publishers of this edition, but by Dramatists' Play Service, who are usually helpful in suggesting short cuts and economies. Naturally the play contains in addition to Pickwick himself all the other well-loved characters: the Wellers, father, son and second wife, Messrs. Wardle, Tupman, Snodgrass and Jingle, the redoubtable Sergeant Buzfuz and the catalytic Mrs. Bardell. Mr. Young's version had a good critical reception in New York last year, following an equally warm one in London a few months earlier. The demands of costumes and scenery may limit its chances in high schools, but it is a thoroughly delightful play and well worth the extra effort of adequate production.

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